



NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

THE COLONELS' REVOLT: EISENHOWER, THE ARMY, AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL
SECURITY

by

Jay M. Parker
Major, U.S. Army

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in
partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of National
Security Decision Making.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are
not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of
the Navy.

Signature

17 June 1994

Paper directed by Professor Mackubin T. Owens, Department of National
Security Decision Making

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DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

19941223 019

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <u>UNCLASSIFIED</u>		1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS N/A	
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT UNLIMITED	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION ADVANCED RESEARCH DEPARTMENT	6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) 35	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) NAVAL WAR COLLEGE NEWPORT, R.I. 02841		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.
		TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) (u)The Colonels' Revolt: Eisenhower, The Army, and The Politics of National Security			
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Jay M. Parker, Major, U.S. Army			
13a. TYPE OF REPORT FINAL	13b. TIME COVERED FROM Mar 74 to Jun 74	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1994 June 17	15. PAGE COUNT 114
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of National Security Decision Making. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.			
17. COSATI CODES FIELD GROUP SUB-GROUP		18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) Strategy, National Security Decision Making, InterService Rivalry, Eisenhower's Defense Budget, Domestic Politics and The Cold War, U.S. Army Budget	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) This paper reviews the budgetary politics and interService rivalries involved in the formulation of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's defense policies. Specifically, the paper chronicles the reaction of the U.S. Army General Staff to proposals to greatly increase U.S. reliance on strategic air power at the expense of Army force structure and modernization. The impact of The Revolt on joint policy making in general and Cold War defense policies in particular is chronicled. The paper concludes with a discussion of the lessons of The Revolt for those who make strategy and defense policy. While the Revolt had little immediate impact on defense planning, it was part of a larger series of events that culminated in the Goldwater-Nichols Act and other reforms in the Department of Defense budget process and in Joint Service planning and operations.			
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS		21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL CHAIRMAN, ADVANCED RESEARCH DEPARTMENT		22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 841-3304	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL 35

DD FORM 1473, 84 MAR

83 APR edition may be used until exhausted.
All other editions are obsolete

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

★ U.S. Government Printing Office: 1985-539-012

0102-LF-014-6602

Abstract of
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"These Colonels"

It was May 21, the Monday after Armed Forces Day, 1956. Across the nation, the weekend had been marked by celebrations of America's military might. But the focus of that afternoon's Pentagon press conference was not the nation's military unity and strength. Instead, an agitated Secretary of Defense, Charles Wilson, joined by his uncomfortable military chiefs, gathered to assure the Pentagon Press Corps that reports of interService rivalry and dissent from White House defense policies were all grossly exaggerated.¹

Army Chief of Staff, General Maxwell Taylor, was clearly the most uncomfortable. The press reports that disrupted Secretary Wilson's weekend--chronicling a major policy fight among the Services--were linked to leaks from a group of Colonels on Taylor's staff. The articles noted a series of leaks attacking other Services, criticizing President Eisenhower's defense strategies, and advancing budget proposals clearly at odds with the priorities of the nation's civilian leaders.² Taylor said he didn't know who "these Colonels" were. The

¹"Wilson Marshals Services' Chiefs To Decry Rivalry," New York Times, 22 May, 1956, sec. A, p. A1; "The Nation: One Machine, One Purpose," Time, 4 June, 1956, p.19.

²"Military Forces Split By Conflict On Arms Policies," New York Times, 19 May, 1956, sec. A, p.1.

Army, he said, was not out to make its own policies and strategies in defiance of national policy.³

"These Colonels..." had been part of a newly created staff section known as The Coordination Group. Organized from among a number of offices at Department of the Army Headquarters, The Coordination Group included some of the brightest officers in the Army. Most had advanced degrees and distinguished combat records.⁴ They waged a policy offensive using other Army Staff officers, friendly journalists, and Members of Congress to promote the Army's agenda. They fought the other Services, the Department of Defense, and the White House for more funding and an end to force cuts. Until now, their initiatives had been limited to public relations efforts and behind the scene policy debates. But now it appeared they had gone too far.⁵

While Taylor spoke, his Secretary of General Staff, Brigadier General William Westmoreland, oversaw the reassignment of the officers. They had operated unnoticed, but the headlines stripped away their anonymity. Within a matter of days, they were gone.⁶

³"Transcript of News Conference Held by Wilson and His Military and Civilian Aides," New York Times, 22 May, 1956, sec. A, p. 14.

⁴James E. Hewes, Jr. From Root To McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1975) pp. 239-241; Interviews with William E. Depuy, The William E. Depuy Papers, Box: Oral History, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks (Hereafter, all Oral Histories from U.S. Army Military History Institute will be referred to as "OH-MHI"); Interview with George I. Forsythe, The George I. Forsythe Papers, Box: Oral History, Vol. II, OH-MHI; Interview with Barksdale Hamlett, The Barksdale Hamlett Papers, Box: Oral History, Section 4, OH-MHI; Interview with Jonathan O. Seaman, The Jonathan O. Seaman Papers, Oral History, Section 6, OH-MHI; Interview with Maxwell D. Taylor, The Maxwell D. Taylor Papers, Oral History, OH-MHI; Interview with William Westmoreland, The William Westmoreland Papers, Oral History, OH-MHI; Interview with Melvin Zais, The Melvin Zais Papers, Oral History, Vol. II, 1977, OH-MHI.

⁵Ibid.; David Halbertsam. The Best and the Brightest, (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1973) pp. 575-578.

⁶Forsythe Interview, OH-MHI; Halbertsam, Best, p. 578; Westmoreland Interview, OH-MHI.

The few written accounts of "The Colonels' Revolt" record it as a defeat for the officers involved. They were undercut by their counterparts in the Air Force, manipulated by Congressmen with their own agendas, dogged by media criticism, and suppressed by civilian leadership in the Department of Defense more interested in the imperatives of the budget than national security. Worst of all, they were crushed by a President bent on restructuring the military to face his narrow view of the military's role in a changing world. ⁷

The story of "The Revolt"--its origins, execution, and epilogue--can provide insight into the development and implementation of American strategy and defense policy in the years between the Korean War and the War in Vietnam. It also has clear implications for the study of national defense policy in the years since. An understanding of those elements of the policy making process that have changed and those that have remained the same makes The Colonels' Revolt a valuable baseline case study, but not as it is presently chronicled.

The real story of The Colonels' Revolt is more complex than the limited accounts that have been published. The Army officers who took part were undercut by their Air Force and Navy rivals, just as the Air Force and Navy were undercut by the Army staff. Congress did play a key role in these events, because all three Services curried favor with Senators and Representatives to advance their own agenda. The media brought the revolt out into the public eye and prompted Secretary Wilson's press conference. But the catalyst was a series of stories

⁷Halbertsam. *ibid.*; A fictional account of The Revolt serves as a subplot Thomas Fleming, The Officers' Wives, (New York: Warner Books, 1982) pp. 288-327. Other accounts have been published, but they rely on Halbertsam as their primary source.

deliberately leaked by the Army to friendly reporters. The Secretary of Defense did block the efforts of The Coordination Group, but he needed constant reassurance and direction from the White House.

The President had a vision of national security clearly at odds with that of the military in general and the Army in particular. All defense policy debates between 1953 and 1961 began and ended with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. When he took office, some assumed his credentials as a West Point graduate, career Army Officer, and World War II hero would dictate pro-military policies in his Administration. Instead, his deeply held beliefs about the importance of a strong, stable domestic economy, his understanding of the realities of the nuclear weapons, and his views of the role of force and diplomacy in the Cold War combined to ensure a firm consistency in his approach to defense.

But in spite of his strong beliefs, President Eisenhower did not "crush" The Revolt. Throughout the remainder of their military careers, the participants survived and many, in fact, thrived. In fact, The Colonels' Revolt did not end in 1956 because it was not a genuine "revolt" at all. It was business as usual. The Coordination Group's actions mirrored those of the 1949 "Admirals' Revolt", the "revolt" of the Air Force generals in 1958, and numerous less reported incidents of military dissent from the President's policies.⁸

Over the next several years, these "revolts" affected the implementation of national strategy, the development of Service doctrine, force structure, defense budgets, and even the conduct of a

⁸While I conclude this was not a true "revolt", I will use the term as given in other accounts to provide consistency.

Presidential election. But they did little to affect the one thing the Colonels were determined to affect--the conduct of the next war. The Army's particular role in the implementation and execution of the Vietnam War had little to do with the issues that produced headlines in 1956.

This does not mean that The Revolt, the policy debate, and the actors involved were irrelevant. When viewed as an isolated event, or when viewed as the culminating event in a series of decisions, The Revolt is little more than another Cold War policy case study. But if viewed as a focal event--one where all the relevant elements of a larger and more significant process can be viewed--The Revolt provides a valuable window into the process of defining and developing strategy.

This paper chronicles and analyzes The Revolt posing four basic questions:

- (1) "What happened ?"--

The May 1956 press conference was not an isolated event. It was the culmination of a complex and lengthy process involving a wide range of important actors. The context of international politics, the domestic political environment, and the belief systems of the individual participants must be used to set the context for The Revolt. Then the details of The Revolt--drawn to as great a degree possible from primary sources--can be chronicled.

2) "What was the impact of the revolt?"--

The Revolt came at a critical time for the nation and the Army. Post World War II optimism and euphoria had long since been replaced by the fears of the Cold War. Nuclear weapons made an all out "Superpower" war less likely, but a series of "little" wars in places like Greece and Indochina had not been deterred by nuclear weapons. The same Army that had crushed the combined powers of the Axis had been stalemated in Korea. Did the issues raised by these correlate to these challenges and did the outcome of The Revolt better prepare the Army for the conflicts that lay ahead? Did the larger process, of which The Revolt was a part, provide the nation with an appropriate strategy?

3) "What, if anything, has changed in the joint policy making process since the revolt?"--

The Revolt was not an internal Army matter. It was a fight between Services over roles, missions, and funding. These battles were fought at a time when the Department of Defense was still in its infancy. The concept of a standing joint staff had emerged from the ad hoc arrangements of World War II. The authority and prestige of the Joint Chiefs and their staffs were in practice, if not in fact, secondary to the authority and prestige of individual Service staffs. Though designed for coordination and cooperation, the Joint arena was still viewed

as a policy battlefield. Since 1956, there have been several significant changes in the structure and authority of the Joint Chiefs and their staff. Some of these changes mirror proposals for reform by participants in the revolt. Would a different JCS charter and structure have prevented the revolt? Do recent reforms preclude future revolts?⁹

4) What does the revolt teach us about strategy and defense policy?--

There are clear parallels between The Revolt and other policy battles over defense spending and force structure. Rather than carelessly drawing oversimplified "lessons" from this event, The Revolt should be placed in larger context and carefully analyzed. This will help determine what lessons can be built into a broader framework to provide a better understanding of the process of strategy and defense policy making.

⁹For a review of the changes in the joint system, see Wayne K. Maynard, "The New American Way of War," Military Review 73 (November 1993) pp. 5-17.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT

TWO PARADES--

They came marching through the arch in New York's Washington Square, past the cheering crowds, and up Fifth Avenue. They were marching in the footsteps of their grandfathers. Almost 25 years before, the victorious American veterans of the Allied Expeditionary Force returned from France and marched through the streets of New York. Then, the parade reflected the somber mood of a nation not convinced that the victory had been worth the high price. Then, the marching units left large gaps in their ranks, marking the place for those who had fallen in the slaughter on the Western Front.¹⁰

In the years after that first parade, America shrank from the leadership role it had assumed in 1917. As it did, the size and quality of its military declined. Some cuts--like the reductions in the battleships--were part of global efforts to prevent future wars. But most were a combination of the realities of domestic economics and of a popular belief that wars on so grand and horrible a scale were no longer possible. By the time the United States had recognized the need to prepare to face the threat of Fascism, the American Army was the 16th largest in the world, reduced to training with mock wooden rifles¹¹

¹⁰Bradley Biggs, Gavin, (Hamden: Archon Books, 1980) pp. 62-67; Interview with COL (ret.) Sanford Ullmann, Washington, D.C., 1 April, 1994.

¹¹Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Volume One, Soldier, General of the Army, President Elect-1890-1952, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983) p. 122; Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, (New York: Doubleday,

This was nothing new. American Armies had always relied on a surge of volunteers, conscripts, and militias to fill its ranks in wartime. As soon as each war ended, it shrank to a small force of regulars. The professional Army had been limited to civil engineering projects on the nation's frontier, coastal defense, and internal security. After the Spanish-American War, those regulars added colonial military duties in the Philippines. The writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan may have motivated some national leaders to ensure a more adequate peacetime Navy, but the Army had no Mahan of its own.¹² On the eve of World War I, the U.S. Military Academy (ironically, Mahan's birthplace) still graduated fewer than 100 new Lieutenants a year.¹³

The end of World War I thrust new responsibilities on the U.S. For more than a century, American foreign policy makers had succeeded in playing off the European powers against each other. This complemented the natural security provided by America's geography. But the cost of World War I had been high for Europe's winners as well as its losers.

The balance of power that had been set forth at the Congress of Vienna had eroded since the Franco-Prussian War and disappeared in 1918. The facade of British and French strength continued for several years, but they lacked effective economic, political, and military capabilities. The Germans also lacked military strength, but unlike France and Great Britain, they regained the political will. In 1933,

1948, pp. 1-15; T.A. Heppenheimer, "Build-Down," American Heritage, 44 (December 1993), pp. 34-46.

¹²Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973) pp. 167-191.

¹³Association of Graduates, United States Military Academy, Register of Graduates, (West Point: Association of Graduates, 1986) pp. 303-311.

the Third Reich emerged as a threat with no European nation capable of confronting its growing military. Meanwhile, Japan's military power grew unchecked in Asia.¹⁴

Even in the wake of The Depression, the U.S. was the only nation with the resource base to meet these threats. As those threats became clearer, President Franklin Roosevelt began the slow process of building the nation's war fighting capability. He had to do so without risking the national domestic political consensus that was still based on traditional American isolationism and on the recent memory of a costly World War.¹⁵

A NEW KIND OF MILITARY, A NEW KIND OF PEACE

The years since 1918 had shaped a generation of officers who would lead the Army into the Cold War. They had seen the costs of a hasty peace unsecured by strong alliances and a credible military. They had survived force reductions, pay cuts, and slow promotions. Finally, they had seen victory and with it a national commitment to an America ready to accept its responsibilities as a world power.

The man chosen to lead the victory parade in 1945 was typical of that generation. Major General James Gavin, commander of the much decorated 82nd Airborne Division, had been a Captain only four years earlier. Gavin and his fellow Airborne Generals, Maxwell Taylor and

¹⁴R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950) pp. 735-800.

¹⁵James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox, (New York: Hartcourt Brace, 1984) pp. 397-430, 457-459; Heppenheimer, *ibid.*; Joseph P. Lash, Roosevelt and Churchill: 1939-1941, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976) pp. 63-92.

Matthew Ridgway, were now certain to assume significant roles in the post-war Army.¹⁶

Unlike Army officers who had won past wars, most would not see reductions in rank. They would continue to lead. For Ridgway and Taylor (West Point classes of 1917 and 1922 respectively), their ranks were not completely out of line with their years of Service. For those of Gavin's generation, however, it was an opportunity for young, bright, aggressive officers to make their mark early in their careers instead of checking the Army-Navy Journal for obituaries and calculating the slow peacetime pace to Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel.¹⁷

Gavin would play a part in policy making, as would men like Andrew Goodpaster, Class of 1939 and already a successful wartime battalion commander, staff officer, and future Assistant to the President of the United States. William Westmoreland, class of 1936 and a Maxwell Taylor protégé, would be Secretary to the General Staff (SGS) when Taylor served as Chief of Staff of the Army.¹⁸ The rapid career rise was not limited to West Point graduates. William E. Depuy had entered the officer corps through the pre-war Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and led a battalion in battle. He was one of the many World War II ROTC graduates who chose to remain on active duty or who returned after brief, unsatisfying stints as post-war civilians.¹⁹ Frank Sackton had been an enlisted man in the National Guard before the war. At war's

¹⁶Biggs, Gavin.

¹⁷John M. Taylor, General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen, (New York: Doubleday, 1989) pg. 30.

¹⁸Association of Graduates, Register.

¹⁹Depuy, Interview, OH-MHI.

end, he was a decorated infantry division operations officer and SGS to General Douglas MacArthur.²⁰

These officers and their contemporaries shared in the post-war parades and celebrations, but many of them also saw the serious challenges ahead. The war had ended with explosion of the atom bomb. Like other technologies before it, the bomb would change warfighting doctrine and alter the military balance of power. But how would that affect the Army?

A closely related issue was the role of the Army Air Corps and the role of Naval Aviation. Many were now arguing that Douhet had been right and that Billy Mitchell had been vindicated by the success of air power in World War II. What would this mean for ground forces? Would they become secondary to strategic airpower?

A baseline question was America's strategy for the postwar era. Would it be based on facing the growing threat from our wartime ally, the Soviet Union? If so, where would an Army make its stand? Would it be in a defensive posture forward based in Europe? Would the Soviets challenge us in other areas of the world and force us to spread ourselves thin? Or would we be drawn into a war on the vast Eurasian landmass and repeat the mistakes of Napoleon and Hitler?

These were questions of strategy and politics that were largely foreign to the Army. While the Navy's geopolitical role had kept that Service involved in debates of this kind even before the emergence of Mahan, the Army had always avoided them. Uncomfortable with politics and disdainful of civilian influence, the Army set itself apart, often

²⁰Interviews with Frank J. Sackton, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, 1978-79.

literally. Generals Scott and Sherman had both removed their headquarters from Washington during the course of their tours as Chief of Staff. The isolation of the Army on the nation's frontier--first as engineers, then as Indian fighters--had only served to reinforce this attitude.²¹

The Army had also been able to separate itself from the national policy debate because of its limited interaction with the domestic economy. The Navy had a significant investment in shipyards and energy resources. Until World War II and the rise of mechanization and airpower, the Army was still a low-tech Service. The tank and the airplane began the process of linking the Army's strength to the industrial base.

But the latest innovation in weaponry brought the Army's purpose into question. American nuclear capabilities had led some to believe that the days of the foot soldiers and land warfare were a thing of the past. Why put soldiers on the ground when a single bomb, delivered quickly and cheaply by air, could save the lives of infantrymen?

Even with "The Bomb," the onset of the Cold War began more than four decades of Army global operations ranging from peacetime forward presence to war. The range and scope of the Army's commitments and the size of the force would exceed any seen in peacetime. American soldiers would serve on every continent and would take part in almost every conceivable operation from scientific research and humanitarian assistance to small unit raids and full scale mechanized warfare.

²¹Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and The State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations, (Cambridge: Belknap, 1957), pp. 210, 222-269.

The first ten years after World War II saw samples of every type of military action. First, the Army played the traditional role of occupier in Germany and Japan. The Army also took on the new role of civil-military operations. Mindful of the costs of failing to secure the peace after World War I, the American Army began the process of post-war political recovery in Germany and Japan. With the introduction of the Marshall Plan (proposed by the wartime Army Chief of Staff turned peacetime Secretary of State), the Army played a key role in the economic rebuilding of allies and former enemies.

The Civil War in Greece brought U.S. soldiers into combat as advisors, a role they would play again in many other nations in the years ahead. Plans to reduce American troop levels in Europe were postponed as tensions increased in Berlin. The formation of the U.S. Air Force did not eliminate the Army's scientific and technological role in the nuclear era. The Army Corps of Engineers, responsible before the war for the building and maintenance of dams, flood projects, and inland waterways, had added the research and development role exemplified by the Manhattan Project. Now it continued to work on missiles and the extension of nuclear weapon capabilities down to the tactical unit level.²²

The years after World War II also saw a dramatic change in the structure of the nation's defense establishment. In 1944, the first steps were taken toward unification of the military. Until World War II, the War Department and the Navy Department ran their respective Services with little or no formal interaction or competition. The development of a joint command structure began in World War II. As the

²²Weigley, American Way, pp. 363-440.

complexity of joint operations increased and the importance of air power grew, the demands to formally unify the Services increased.²³

Rather than pour all Services into one, the Services were further divided into three with the creation of a separate Air Force out of the Army Air Corps. A Department of Defense was created with the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Army (formerly the Secretary of War), and the new Secretary of the Air Force all answering to the Secretary of Defense. The Chiefs of Staff of the Services (and, later, the Commandant of the Marine Corps) formed the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In addition to Chiefs from all Services, a General Officer was appointed to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs²⁴.

This form of unification increased rather than decreased interService competition. Samuel Huntington has argued that the period from 1945 to 1950 saw the most intense interService competition in history. Each Service feared that the other would take away their mission, their budgets, and their force structure. The battles were carried on in public view through the press and through Congressional hearings.²⁵

Their battles were not just with each other. The relationship between the Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense was far from amicable. The demands for post-war reductions and the need to referee Service disputes frequently put the Secretary in an unenviable position. The new cabinet post was answerable directly to the President for the readiness of all Services.

²³Huntington, Soldier, pp. 335-445; Huntington, The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics, (New York: Columbia, 1961) pp. 370-374.

²⁴Hewes, Root to McNamara, 163-167; Huntington, Soldier, *ibid*.

²⁵Huntington, Common Defense, p. 369.

At times, the political demands from the White House clashed significantly with the professional demands from the Services. The foreign policy agenda of the new DOD also led to disputes with the Department of State. The first Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, was increasingly despondent over his inability to effectively control this enormous new agency. He was eventually institutionalized and committed suicide. The second Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, administered dramatic cuts to the budget in order to comply with President Harry Truman's fiscal agenda. His cuts further antagonized interService rivalries as Services competed for shares of an ever shrinking pie.²⁶

One such cut led to the "Admirals' Revolt" of 1949. Proposals to reduce the number of carriers and carrier air groups and to eliminate funds to construct a "supercarrier" led to open protests by senior naval officers. Appearing before the House Armed Services Committee, Admiral Arthur Radford, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, charged that the Air Force was maneuvering to eliminate the Navy's air component and assume its missions. When the smoke cleared, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Louis Denfield had effectively been relieved, but the cuts in carrier assets had been scaled back.²⁷

The preparation of the 1950 defense budget had been a particularly heated political fight. InterService rivalry combined with Congressional agendas to drag the fight into public. The hopes of

²⁶Ambrose, Eisenhower, Vol One, pp. 486-487; Huntington, Soldier, pp. 44-446; Warner Schilling, "The Politics of National Defense: Fiscal 1950," Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets, Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, ed., (New York: Columbia, 1962) pp. 135-213.

²⁷Weigley American Way, pp. 367-369.

unifying the process had proven premature. The new Defense Department and Joint Chiefs did not provide a means for channeling and controlling conflict. Instead, it seemed to generate it.²⁸

Throughout the 1950 budget battle, the principal focus had been on the need to counter the threat of Communist expansion in Europe. Secretary of State George C. Marshall argued vigorously for the maintenance of a credible U.S. presence in Europe while our allies continued to rebuild economically and politically.²⁹ But while America's military and political focus had been on Europe, its first conventional military challenge came in Asia.

The victory of Mao Tse-Tung's Peoples' Liberation Army had raised domestic outcries in America. The conservative wing of the Republican Party (so committed to isolationism ten years earlier) argued for an Asia first policy. But despite the emotional outcry over the "loss of China" generated by the outspoken China Lobby in the U.S., it was not China that drew U.S. troops into battle.³⁰

Occupied for more than 35 years by Japan, Korea had been divided at war's end in what was thought would be a temporary measure to facilitate the transition from colonial rule. But the rival political forces among both the occupiers and the occupied made it increasingly

²⁸Huntington, Common Defense, pp. 369-404

²⁹Dean Acheson, Present At The Creation, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969) pp. 302-314; Schilling, "Politics of National Defense," pp. 183-195.

³⁰Halbertsma, Best, pp. 137-146; Paul Y. Hammond "NSC-68: Prologue to Rearmament," Schilling, Hammond, and Snyder, ed., Strategy, pp. 284-285; James C. Thomson, Jr., Peter W. Stanley, and John Curtis Perry, Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia, New York: Harper and Row, 1981, pp. 217-234; Barbara W. Tuchman, Stillwell and the American Experience in China: 1911-54, (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 671.

clear that the division was not temporary and transition to unified self rule would not be forthcoming.³¹

In 1950, the North Korean Army crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea. American soldiers, serving in their civil-military role, were among those who fled Seoul ahead of the invading North Koreans. Meanwhile, American soldiers in Japan, serving as occupiers, were sent to stop the collapse of South Korea.

The debate over the Army's performance in the early days of the war has grown more complex as historians pay more attention to the conduct of that war. For years, the standard explanation for the failure of the American soldiers to stop the advancing North Koreans focused on the training and readiness of the Army in Japan. American soldiers, the argument went, had grown too comfortable and too soft. How else to explain the retreat of an Army that had defeated Japan and Germany only five years before?³²

But in the post mortem of Korea, the Army argued that individual soldier readiness was only a small portion of the story. American soldiers had fought bravely and well. Units sent to Korea initially went as a show of force and were sent equipped for garrison duty rather than for combat. Broken weapons and equipment were taken into battle from maintenance facilities in Japan without repair. Repair parts and trained maintenance personnel were not available. Soldiers had trained during occupation duty. Units of the 25th Infantry Division had been

³¹Young Whan Kihl, Politics and Policies in Divided Korea: Regimes in Contest, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 28-39; Glenn D. Paige, The Korea Decision, (New York: Free Press, 1968); William Whitney Stueck, Jr. The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1981).

³²Max Hastings, The Korean War, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) pp. 76-96.

training with South Korean officers in Japan on the day of the invasion.³³

The problem was one of funding and equipment. The belief that nuclear weapons would deter or--at worst--quickly end any wars had shifted the focus away from maintenance and equipment modernization. The Army units sent into Pusan were trained to use their anti-armor weapons, but the weapons were not adequate to stop North Korean tanks. Rifle, machine gun, and mortar marksmanship had been practiced as much as limited training ammunition stocks would allow. But broken weapons are of limited use to a trained marksman. Poorly equipped soldiers whose weapons can not stop the enemy are more likely to flee than stand, and some of them did flee. But for every unit that "bugged out" others stood and fought against overwhelming odds.³⁴

In the end, the decision to reach a political settlement rather than taking the war into China (as General Douglas MacArthur had urged) led to a stalemate. Had we won in Korea? Kim IL Sung was still in power. The threat of future war on the Korean Peninsula still existed, China had emerged as a significant military threat. But had we lost? The borders we set out to protect had been restored. The South Korean military had been modernized and was being trained to take on a greater share of its defense. The US had demonstrated its resolve.

And what about America's nuclear deterrent? Some historians now argue that the threat of nuclear war had finally led China to force the North Koreans to the bargaining table. But why did it take three years?

³³Ibid.,; Russell A. Gugeler, Combat Actions in Korea, (Washington, D.C.; Office of the Chief of Military History, 1970); Interviews with LTC (ret.) John M. Parker, 1952-present.

³⁴. Ibid.

And why did nuclear weapons fail to deter them from entering the war? Perhaps most important, now that the Soviets had the bomb, would nuclear weapons become a kind of mutual checkmate preventing the superpowers from resorting to all out war, but ensuring the continuation of low level "proxy" wars?

America had committed itself to the Grand Strategy of Containment. We would hold the Communist nations within their existing borders while the inherent contradictions and weaknesses of Marxism led to their inevitable collapse. But where and how would America contain its Cold War enemies? Nuclear weapons were not enough.

The Korean War produced several lessons for the Army. Some of these lessons contradicted each other. One school held that Korea had been "The wrong war, fought at the wrong time against the wrong enemy". America should have focused attention on Europe. The commitment of forces in Korea had been a mistake from the outset and it would only serve to drag the US into future conflicts, bleeding away valuable political and economic resources.³⁵

But in the years ahead, others would come to disagree. Korea had been consistent with the range of military options America would have to be prepared to exercise. We would be tested again and again. Each time we failed to respond would strengthen the enemies' resolve and weaken America's credibility in the eyes of our important allies. Korea and Europe were not separate issues. They were, in fact, inseparable.³⁶

³⁵Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr. The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1986, pp. 16-17.

³⁶This view is consistent with the gradual evolution of limited war writings as The Revolt progressed. The "Munich" analogy began to bear greater weight than "Never Again" during the gradual escalation of American involvement in Vietnam. This is more evident in the writings and comments made during The Revolt. On the Munich Analogy and Vietnam,

The U.S. had demonstrated resolve and effectively held the line in Korea as it had earlier in Greece. In both cases, the Army had played a key role. But in both cases, the Army did so without the necessary weapons, equipment. More importantly, they did so without a coherent doctrine consistent with an articulated national strategy. "Never again!," argued American Army officers.³⁷

America's security and, not coincidentally, the Army's future lay in the ability to provide a range of responses to potential threats. Without the strategy, capability and political will to fight limited wars like Korea, the U.S. would consistently find itself pushed to the brink, where the only option to diplomatic solutions was all out nuclear war. Sooner or later, the bluff would be called and America would be forced to either over react or back down.

Debating these issues, particularly in public, was new to most Army officers. The Army's traditional self-imposed separation from the policy debate meant officers had little experience in this arena. Furthermore, anti-intellectualism was thought to be a dominant value in the Army's organizational culture.³⁸ That changed with World War II.

It changed because the anti-intellectualism of the army was mislabeled. The Army did not actively participate in intellectual debates about strategy and policy because they saw little in those debates that affected a continental army. But within the Army, the

see also Halbertsma, Best, and Yuen Foong Khong, Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

³⁷Krepinevich, *ibid.*; A variation of "Never Again" is found in James M. Gavin's discussion of improved capabilities to deal with future Korea's, War and Peace in the Space Age, (New York: Harpers, 1958); Khong, Analogies, pp. 113-115.

³⁸Huntington, Soldier, pp. 309-312, 457-463; Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960) p. 135.

academic study of military operations and tactics, the conduct of formal schooling, and the extensive writings and discussions on martial topics, had been going on since shortly after the Civil War.

Sherman opened a series of schools on advanced tactics and operations. Emory Upton, Tasker Bliss and others wrote, taught, and encouraged the intellectual development of young officers in the later 1800's.³⁹ The global nature of World War II and the realities of the post-war security environment shifted the Army's focus outward.

Brigadier General Herman Beukma, Eisenhower's classmate and head of USMA's Department of English, Government, and History (later reorganized as the Department of Social Sciences) had foreseen the need for a new generation of Army thinkers.⁴⁰ General George Marshall's wartime staff boasted a number of Rhodes Scholars, to include Dean Rusk and Beukma's successor, Colonel George "Abe" Lincoln.⁴¹ Successful wartime commanders, like Goodpaster and Roger Hilsman, were sent to graduate school for Ph.D.s.⁴²

The result was a group of officers, mentored and encouraged by the Army leadership, whose intellectual energies were focused on the entire international security arena and not just the internal workings of the Army. Writing in civilian as well as military journals, these officers focused on basic operational issues as well as fundamental issues of doctrine, strategy, and national policy. Limited war, they argued, was an option that could not be ignored. It was consistent with Clausewitz's dictate that war and politics could not be separated. In

³⁹Huntington, Soldier, pp. 230-237.

⁴⁰Janowitz, The Professional, pp. 132, 441.

⁴¹Halbertsma, Best, pp. 389-90.

⁴²Association of Graduates, Register; Roger Hilsman, personal conversations with author.

the Nuclear age, it was particularly important to remember that the onset of war was not the end of diplomacy. Effective diplomacy required a wider range of options than massive use of strategic nuclear weapons.⁴³

There were members of the academic community who shared the Army viewpoint. In the aftermath of the Korean War, a number of scholars were writing about limited war in academic and policy journals. Henry Kissinger, then a young professor at Harvard, made the bestseller lists with his book on nuclear weapons and limited war. He was joined by Bernard Brodie, William Kaufmann, and others writing on the importance of building and maintaining the capability to fight limited, conventional wars using an Army equipped with tactical nuclear weapons. If strategic nuclear weapons were too unthinkable an option to employ on civilian targets, then smaller yield nuclear devices, aimed at battlefield targets, were a means of fighting limited wars without resorting to either escalation or stalemate.⁴⁴

To wage this kind of war, the United States needed the capacity to forward deploy conventional ground forces to a wide range of potential battlefields. Local, not global wars would be the point of confrontation for the superpowers. Politically and militarily, nations facing the Communist onslaught could not face this threat alone.

⁴³Morton Halperin, Limited War: An Essay on the Development of the Theory and Annotated Bibliography, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1962). In addition to providing an overview of limited war theory, Halperin provides an extensive bibliography that cites a number of military authors to include Frank Sackton and Donovan Yeuell.

⁴⁴Halperin, *ibid.*

Strategic nuclear weapons would not always prove a realistic an option for U.S. decision makers.⁴⁵

Providing and maintaining this option would be expensive. Its supporters argued that the costs could and must be borne. The policy of containment could not be focused solely at the top end of the spectrum of conflict. Furthermore, the strong domestic mood of anti-Communism ensured that the national political consensus would support such a policy.⁴⁶

One key individual, however, did not completely share this view. He was concerned about the economic foundations of security, convinced that the U.S. could not match large Soviet conventional forces, and fixed in his belief that America could not serve as the global policeman. He wanted a smaller defense budget and a greater reliance on allies, diplomacy, and nuclear deterrence as a means of security.

As an Army officer who shared the experiences of Ridgway, Taylor, and Gavin, he was well aware of the costs of an isolated nation defended by an inadequate military. But he had seen the domestic economic and political arenas and their role in stability and security. He had seen the conduct of World War II from a higher vantage point. He had worked closely with allies to secure the victory and ensure lasting peace. Now, as President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower would play the deciding role in both fostering and resisting the Colonels' Revolt.

⁴⁵Bernard Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959) pp. 305-357; Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, (New York: John Wiley, 1963), pp. 58-75.

⁴⁶Halbertsam, Best, pp. 128-130.

FROM GENERAL TO PRESIDENT

By 1940, Dwight Eisenhower had spent 25 years as an Army officer. Unlike many of his 1915 USMA classmates, he had no combat experience. He had missed World War I while serving in stateside training assignments. Some of his contemporaries had at least had the opportunity to serve on expeditionary missions in China and Latin America, but Eisenhower had spent most of his time in staff assignments.⁴⁷

It was his good fortune to have to right staff assignments with the right mentors. First, he served under the legendary General Fox Conner, General Pershing's World War I Operations Officer. Early contact with Pershing and Marshall exposed Eisenhower to the dynamics of senior command long before many of his contemporaries. That assignment led to an early opportunity to attend the Army's Command and Staff Course at Leavenworth (where he was first in his class) which further propelled his career and marked him as an officer to be watched.⁴⁸

Unlike his friends George Patton and Omar Bradley, Eisenhower's peacetime assignments were not confined to training units at remote posts or Service in overseas missions. He served for almost ten years in Washington in a series of political-military posts. He dealt extensively with members of Congress and the press. When domestic turmoil was brought on by the depression, Eisenhower witnessed it first hand.⁴⁹

Newsreels show Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur watching the burning of the makeshift shelters in "Hooverville," erected

⁴⁷Ambrose, Soldier, pp. 67-132

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 67-86.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 87-101.

in Washington in 1932 by disgruntled World War I veterans. In the background, MacArthur's aide, Major Dwight Eisenhower, is visible as Army troops move in to disperse the protesters.⁵⁰ Eisenhower was present for the early budget battles between MacArthur and President Franklin Roosevelt. MacArthur also later relied on Eisenhower's skills as his assistant in the Philippines from 1935 to 1939.⁵¹

Eisenhower returned to the United States and later served under MacArthur's arch rival, General George C. Marshall. Eisenhower was one of many bright young officers whose career Marshall had noted and tracked between the wars. Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was summoned to Washington by Marshall.⁵²

During the war, his political and diplomatic skills were put to extensive use maintaining the alliance and directing much of the political course of the post-war world. His personal popularity translated into a political attractiveness and he was courted by both parties to run for the Presidency in 1948. Eisenhower dodged the political limelight, however and retired after serving as Chief of Staff. Recalled to active duty from Columbia University where he served as President, Eisenhower returned to Europe to command the new NATO military alliance.⁵³

His decision to run for President in 1952, after turning aside similar pressures in 1948, was a complicated one. His most thorough biographer, Stephen Ambrose, notes that little in the documents of the Eisenhower Library indicates any early plans aimed at the White House.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 96-99.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 101-119.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 131-153; Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948) pp. 13-48.

⁵³Ambrose, Soldier, pp. 171-528; Eisenhower, Crusade, pp. 49-478.

The recurring theme in his writings and speeches on the subject is the affect of appeals to his sense of duty.⁵⁴

Much of that sense of duty was motivated by his unhappiness with the foreign policy leadership of President Harry Truman. In addition to Eisenhower's unhappiness with the Democrats, he feared that a Republican victory, with the conservative right wing of the party in control, would seriously disrupt the political and military alliances he had worked so hard to construct. He was concerned about the nature and direction of the Cold War and felt strongly about the need to effectively face this new threat to the American way of life.

He was also concerned about the domestic political economy. He had seen Washington's response to the depression and had literally fought with mobs disgruntled with the government's fiscal policies. Though initially cautiously supportive of the New Deal, he feared the increased domestic power of the government brought on by a weak economy. Eisenhower felt that one certain way to weaken the domestic economy was to build a military force capable of meeting and defeating any potential threat. The security it provided would be undercut by the damage to the economy and, consequently, the national political consensus. A strong Army defending a weak nation was not, in fact, secure.⁵⁵

Eisenhower's appeal to both parties was based on his strong public appeal. His personal popularity transcended issues and ideology. He could avoid the sharp divisions emerging in post-war American politics.

⁵⁴Ambrose, Soldier, pp. 510-528.

⁵⁵Ambrose, President, pp. 88-96; Huntington, Defense, pp. 66-67; This was a theme Eisenhower returns to again and again. For a discussion of Eisenhower's views on stemming the tide of "New Dealism" and insights into his views on political pragmatism, see Letter to Edgar Eisenhower, Name Series, Box 11, Edgar Eisenhower Folder-1956 (2), Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (hereafter DDE-AWF).

American's believed that only Eisenhower, who had forged the consensus among the Allies and led the Crusade in Europe, could lead a new crusade against the Communist threat abroad and economic disruption at home. His personal promise to "go to Korea", virtually assured his election, despite the fact that this pledge gave no specific plan of action for resolving the stalemate.⁵⁶

Eisenhower was a man with strong beliefs. But he was also pragmatic. At the base of Eisenhower's politic beliefs was his feel for the practical realities of Washington politics. In spite of his reputation, he was not one for crusades. Several years into his presidency, Eisenhower wrote his brother Edgar (who frequently criticized his younger brother for not reversing the "socialistic" programs of the New Deal"), "The most that anyone--even if he is supported by a good majority in the Congress--could do would be to gradually stop the trend in this direction."⁵⁷

Eisenhower's years of experience as a consensus building staff officer and as a careful observer of American politics made him anything but the arch typical General with a "military mind." This practical underpinning would consistently affect the way Eisenhower would deal with virtually every issue, to include those he felt most deeply about.

ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLT

A combination of factors began The Revolt and defined its conduct and character. First, the international environment had changed. The

⁵⁶Ambrose, Soldier, pp. 569-570.

⁵⁷Letter To Edgar Eisenhower, *ibid.*

balance of power had been dramatically altered by the outcome of World War II and the introduction of nuclear weapons. There were now two superpowers. Each had the theoretical capacity to wage nuclear war on the other. Each was convinced that the ideological power of the other posed a threat to vital national interests.

While nuclear weapons altered the top end of the spectrum of conflict, the overlay of the Cold War on local wars turned what might have once been considered distant conflicts into brush fire wars. Each of these local wars could escalate into global war. Each could also shift the global political balance of power.

Next, the military Services were no longer two separate and independent cabinet level departments. Now, three Services competed in a single joint arena for a shrinking share of the budget. Each had been affected by its experiences between and during the World Wars. Each viewed the other with suspicion. Meanwhile, a single Service secretary could play the feuding Services off against one another.

Finally, a popular President with an unassailable reputation as a military leader wanted to cut the defense budget and looked askance at the viability of limited war. This same President, however, was a consensus builder. He was less apt to demand than he was to direct. He would not let his own Service off the hook, but political reality said he could not fully suppress their role in the policy debate.

These four factors--the international environment, the domestic environment, the militaries' individual and collective organizational culture, and the belief systems of key individuals--all culminated in The Revolt.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLT

EISENHOWER, AMERICA, AND THE NEW LOOK

The newly elected Eisenhower administration had two immediate national security priorities. The first was ending the war in Korea. Eisenhower kept his promise to "go to Korea," traveling shortly after the election. He concluded from his visit that the war could not be won militarily without unacceptable costs. A diplomatic solution would have to be achieved.⁵⁸

He also decided to select Admiral Arthur Radford, Commander in Chief, Pacific and a survivor of the "Admirals' Revolt" to replace the retiring JCS Chairman, General Omar Bradley. Radford would join newly selected Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson and Eisenhower in dealing with the second priority, restructuring the U.S. Defense budget.⁵⁹

Under President Truman, the defense budget had focused on building up to a year of maximum danger. The emphasis was on providing capabilities to match the specific projected threat. Eisenhower felt defense spending had to focus on "the long haul." To prepare for that long haul, assumptions about the international environment, U.S. national defense policy, force structure, weapon systems, and doctrine had to be reexamined.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Ambrose, President, pp. 30-35; Glenn H. Snyder, "The 'New Look' of 1953," in Schilling, Hammond, and Snyder, Strategy, pp. 391-393.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Huntington, Defense, pp. 67-68; Schilling, "Fiscal 1950", pp. 214-222; Snyder "New Look", pp. 472-475;

In reality, the process of reviewing the premises of U.S. defense policy had already begun in the previous administration. The establishment of the Defense Department, the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, the Korean War, the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons, and the explosion of the first Soviet atom bomb all generated reviews of the premises of American Defense Policy. Even the "year of maximum danger" approach had been undergoing revision.⁶¹

The key difference was a new President, with a new Cabinet, a new party in control of Congress, and new members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After criticizing those making the policies, they were now the policy makers. The outcome was their responsibility.

The outcome was "The New Look," formally documented in National Security Council (NSC) Document 162/2. Approved by Eisenhower in October 1953, NSC 162/2 was to serve as the guideline for the Fiscal Year (FY) 1955 Defense Budget. Interim steps had already been taken to reduced the FY 1954 budget, but those were largely stop gap measures. The FY 1955 budget would be the first one the new team could take full responsibility for.⁶²

Two key elements of the New Look were critical to the events leading up The Revolt. First and foremost was the cuts in force structure. The Army would lose almost one-third of its personnel, dropping from 1,481,000 to 1,000,000. The result would be a cut in divisions from 20 to 14. The Army would now be a strategic mobile reserve rather than a forward deployed force. The New Look relied on strategic nuclear weapons, improved local defense capabilities of

⁶¹Schilling, "Fiscal 1950", pp. 209-213.

⁶²Huntington, Defense, pp. 64-76; Snyder, "New Look".

allies, and the belief that no future war would be fought solely with conventional forces.⁶³

The second factor was the underlying strategy. The new administration had reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to a Grand Strategy of Containment. While the Eisenhower administration had proposed a different policy to implement the strategy, it was still based on the same premises as those used by Truman. Despite campaign rhetoric by the conservative Republican, there would be no rolling back of the Iron Curtain. The unanswered question was "Can an asymmetric policy prove more effective than a symmetric one?".⁶⁴

The President's approval of NSC 162/2 did not represent the final step in the process. Several of the new Chiefs of Staff--sworn into office less than three months earlier--endorsed the recommended policy with serious reservations and stated disclaimers and conditions. It was still in concept form with specifics yet to be finalized.⁶⁵

It would also allow President Eisenhower to move toward a balanced budget. Balancing the budget was more than just a political goal. It was a political imperative of the Republican Party's right wing. The conservatives were led by Eisenhower's principal opponent for the nomination in 1952, Senator Robert Taft of Ohio. Taft also represented the isolationist elements that had dominated Republican politics in the years between the World Wars. Despite his own personal popularity,

⁶³Huntington, Defense, pp. 73-76; Snyder, "New Look," pp. 413-415.

⁶⁴Snyder, "New Look", pp. 406-410; for a discussion of symmetric vs. asymmetric containment, see John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 352-357.

⁶⁵Snyder, "New Look."

Eisenhower was in no position to ignore the Taft Republicans without precipitating a major political battle.⁶⁶

But the defense cuts were not based solely on political considerations. They were also based on Eisenhowers own deeply held beliefs. The possibilities of victory in any kind of traditional sense was no longer possible on the modern battlefield. A superpower confrontation was now an invitation to a nuclear blood bath. Small, limited wars were stepping stones to larger wars. Either nations accepted the risks of escalation into superpower confrontation, or accepted long, bloody, and ultimately divisive stalemates like Korea.⁶⁷

The only hope was to deter war and that meant relying on the economy of nuclear weapons. Conventional deterrence was unrealistic. The U.S. could not hope to match the manpower reserves of the Soviet Union or China, let alone a combined threat. To even try was to tax the domestic economy beyond the breaking point. Eisenhower was not willing to do that. A society based on a constant wartime economy was a threat to Democracy.

Furthermore, the ultimate costs of a deficit funded, arms industry based economy might be the kind of domestic dislocation that leads to internal collapse. In either case, the U.S. would be threatened every bit as much as it was threatened by external forces. The hope had to lie in balancing internal growth and stability with international security.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Ambrose, President, pp. 85-91.

⁶⁷Ambrose, President, pp. 171-172; Snyder, "The New Look," pp. 389-391.

⁶⁸This strong belief by Eisenhower will be noted in numerous specific citations throughout this paper. A summary of Eisenhowers views can be see in Ambrose, President, pp. 86-91.

Eisenhower made his views clear to the public. One of his earliest speech presented a theme he would return to often. Speaking to the American Society of Newspaper Editors , Eisenhower saw the two options presented by a modern arms race.

"The worst is atomic war", he said. The best would be this: a life of perpetual fear and tension: a burden of arms draining the wealth and labor of all peoples....Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed....This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from the cross of iron." ⁶⁹

While Eisenhower would not support an arms race or an attempt at conventional parity he also could not ignore or wish away the threat. The Soviet Union had forcibly secured its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. The Iron Curtain, in Winston Churchill's words, had descended and there was little in Soviet practice of Leninist ideology to believe that it would stop there.

In the minds of many Americans, the threat was not solely external. Traditional American fears of internal Communism had been revived and heightened by a number of post-war politicians, to include Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy and Eisenhower's own Vice-President, Richard Nixon. Communist agents were feared to be literally everywhere. They had, it was contended, infiltrated every American institution to include the defense and foreign policy establishments. Any sign of weakness or compromise would be viewed not just as naiveté or ignorance,

⁶⁹Ambrose, President, pp. 94-96

but active participation in the destruction of America. Eisenhower would have to walk a thin line to meet both the real and the perceived dynamics of the international security environment while preserving any kind of political consensus and economic stability at home.⁷⁰

Dividing the Shrinking Budget

As the 1955 budget began to take shape, the internal debate over the division of defense resources increased. The Army felt the greatest threat as proposals were made for a ten percent cut in force. The Air Force also objected to cuts in tactical assets, though clearly the Air Force was feeling less of the knife than other Services.⁷¹

The debate soon narrowed down to one between Wilson and Army Chief of Staff General Matthew Ridgway with JCS Chairman Admiral Radford supporting and enforcing DOD policy. Ridgway's objections were both substantive and procedural. He clearly objected to the cuts being proposed. Despite arguments to the contrary by DOD policy makers and Radford, these cuts could not all come from the support structure. Combat units would have to be affected. Furthermore, economists were predicting a major boom in America's fiscal strength at a time when the cuts were being tied to the administration's gloomy economic forecasts.⁷²

⁷⁰Ambrose, President, 160-168; Halbertsma, Best, pp. 129-130.

⁷¹Memo for Chief of Staff, "Alternate Courses of Action..." 21 January 1953, Records Group (RG) 319, Box 808, National Archives (NA); Memorandum For Record, Subject: Briefing for Mr. Wilson, 18 November 1953, RG 319, Box 808, NA; Letter from Chief of Staff to General John Hull, 15 January 1954, RG 319, Box 852, NA.

⁷²Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway, (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956) pp. 270-273.

Such cuts made the U.S. increasingly more vulnerable to the threat from small, brush fire wars that could nibble away at American influence while further emboldening Communist aggression. Ridgway was not unfamiliar with brush fire wars. As a political-military affairs specialist in Latin America, he had seen the dynamics of military action and political turmoil. He also had first hand experience in Korea, where he had taken Command from MacArthur after his relief by President Truman. Ridgway had been given well deserved credit for putting American forces back on the offensive and reviving an Army demoralized after Chinese intervention surprised and overwhelmed UN forces.⁷³

Ridgway also objected to the way that Wilson and, to a lesser degree, Radford restrained the debate. Wilson had been the President of General Motors and Eisenhower looked to him to provide the same kind of executive leadership to the Defense Department that he had provided to one of the world's largest corporations. Despite what many of his critics claimed, Wilson did not always try to run DOD and the Services like a business. He also did not try to adapt to traditional military methods of leadership and management. His tenure was marked with sharp, harsh debates with nearly all the senior military leadership except for Radford. Gavin spoke for many of his colleagues when he called Wilson "The most uninformed man about military matters and most determined to remain so."⁷⁴

The Generals and Admirals did not expect their wishes to be translated into policy. They did expect that the civilian leaders would listen to their advice and give it full consideration even if the final

⁷³Ridgway, Soldier, pp. 195-220; Weigley, American Way, p. 390

⁷⁴Biggs, Gavin, pp. 86; Gavin, War and Peace in the Space Age, (New York: Harper, 1958) p. 155.

decision was at odds with the military's conclusions. Ridgway had briefed civilian leaders on a daily basis in the early days of World War II. He could be diplomatic and politically sensitive.⁷⁵ But he also felt strongly that military leaders should give their candid and unvarnished advice on questions of military policy.

The statesman (should say) to the soldier: 'This is our national policy. This is what we wish to accomplish or would like to do. What military means are required to support it?' 'Very well (the soldier replies). Here is what you policy will require in men and guns, in ships and planes.'...The professional soldier should never pull punches. No factors of political motivation could excuse ...such an action. If the objective ...is greater than the political leaders wish to support...or think the economy of the country can bear, this is not (the soldier's) business. If the civilian authority finds the costs to be greater than the country can bear, then either the objectives themselves should be modified, or the responsibility for the risks involved should be forthrightly accepted.⁷⁶

Wilson thought otherwise. First, he felt Ridgway and the other military opponents of the New Look did not understand all the elements of and the basis for Eisenhower's policies. Furthermore, he felt that the Joint Chiefs had an obligation not merely to accept, but to support the budget and the manpower cuts being proposed. Despite vigorous dissent by Ridgway and others in the military, both Wilson and Eisenhower reported to Congress, the press and the public that the New Look had the unanimous support of the JCS.

The agreement was not unanimous and it was not unconditional. Furthermore, events began to enhance the arguments of those favoring a limited war capability. Less than six months after the final agreement in Korea, the Viet Mihn forces under Ho Chi Minh began to close in on

⁷⁵Ridgway, Soldier, pp. 35-50.

⁷⁶Ridgway, Soldier, pp. 271-272.

the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu. The French called for U.S military aid. The U.S. had been paying more than 78 per cent of the costs for the war (more by some calculations). But now the French wanted U.S. air support, U.S. troops, and--if need be--atomic weapons.⁷⁷

For more than six months, the U.S. wrestled with the decision to intervene at Dien Bien Phu. Even after the garrison fell, arguments were made for U.S. involvement. What ended those efforts was the intervention of Ridgway and members of his Army Staff.

Ridgway directed a thorough study of the operational and logistical implications of such an intervention. The conclusion briefed to Eisenhower over the objections of Radford, was that such a move would require at least 10 U.S. divisions, and extraordinary logistics effort. Even with such an undertaking, the best that could be hoped for was a stalemate.⁷⁸

The immediate result of the study was Eisenhower's refusal to support direct U.S. military intervention. But there was another less obvious result. Both sides of the New Look debate felt their position had been bolstered. Ridgway and the Army staff believed that they had demonstrated that airpower--particularly strategic airpower--could not secure victory. The U.S. had refused to use nuclear weapons at Dien Bien Phu, thus demonstrating the political constraints limiting the

⁷⁷Leslie H. Gelb with Richard K. Betts, The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1979) pp. 53-54; George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950 - 1975, 2nd ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), pp. 26-40; Herring and Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: 'The Day We Didn't Go To War' Revisited," The Journal of American History, 71, (September 1984), pp. 343-363; Ridgway, Soldier, pp. 275-277; Ridgway Papers, Box 51, Matloff Interview, OH-MHI. Professor Warner Schilling of Columbia University has calculated that American Marshall Aid to France roughly equalled the French cost for the War in Indochina. Lecture, Columbia University, Fall semester, 1986.

⁷⁸Ibid.

utility of this new form of warfare. Furthermore, the nature of the French Indochina War demonstrated the importance of ground troops. If the U.S. was serious about containing Communism, then ground forces would have to be increased. If nuclear weapons were to have any utility, they have to be cut down in size and deployed to tactical units. They would prove more acceptable as a small but powerful battlefield weapon than a large, theater level weapon with unacceptable risks of collateral damage and escalation.⁷⁹

But others argued that Dien Bien Phu had shown the opposite. First, Ridgway's own study concluded that the number of ground troops required to have a decisive impact at Dien Bien Phu far exceeded American capabilities. The only options would be stripping out troops already dedicated to Europe's defense. This was both militarily and politically unacceptable. The new North Atlantic Treaty Organization was already showing strains in the European Defense Community (EDC) debate and a U.S. withdrawal would weaken support for EDC and risk additional political victories for the Communists in Europe.⁸⁰ The threat of nuclear weapons had kept the conflict localized.

And Indochina was just that. This was a local war that had to be fought by the Vietnamese. The French involvement was still tied to colonial interest rather than to Vietnamese self determination and was therefore doomed to fail. Only political concern over French support for the EDC kept U.S. support at the levels provided. The New Look

⁷⁹Gavin later argued that helicopters and other modern capabilities could have made Dien Bien Phu winable, Gavin, OH-MHI; Frank Sackton, "The Changing Nature of War," Military Review, November 1954, pp. 52-62.

⁸⁰Discussion of Dien Bien Phu and the related issues of the EDC are found in Memorandums of Discussion at 183rd through the 195th Meetings on the NSC, DDE/AWF, NSC series, Box 5.

argued that U.S. military operations were to be conducted in conjunction with local militaries who would assume the major burden of the fight and with allies who serve to multiply the affects of limited U.S. ground forces. Airpower alone was not the answer, but neither was an increasing ground forces.⁸¹

Another factor not widely discussed at the time, was Eisenhower's other capability for dealing with local wars. The best way to counter the rising risks of Communist subversion and domination was to stop it early at the local level, but to do it with local forces. Open U.S. involvement only provided the Communists with a propaganda advantage.

But the U.S. could provide covert aid, and that is exactly what happened in Iran. Western commercial interest were alarmed at support for Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh. They feared that this would lead to a Communist takeover and an unacceptable Soviet control of vital oil reserves. The Central Intelligence Agency provided advice, technical, planning, and operational support for those who wished to overthrow Mossadegh. Arguably, Mossadegh would never have been overthrown without the CIA's direct involvement in the coup.⁸²

The CIA repeated those actions in Guatemala in 1954. Again, U.S. commercial interest protested that their traditional influence in Central America (and their financial stake in the region) was endangered by "Communist infiltration" of the government of Guatemala's Democratically elected President, Jacobo Arbenz. Arms were provided, a naval blockade was conducted, and CIA agents created a revolt (based on a small, untrained Army whose size and strength were exaggerated with

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ambrose, President, pp. 111-112, 129-130.

CIA propaganda) and overthrew Arbenz. In his first two years in office, Eisenhower felt he had already demonstrated the right way to handle Communist expansion and it did not require an increase in U.S. conventional forces. Army divisions and tactical nuclear weapons would not be needed in places like the Middle East or Central America if the CIA could stop these uprisings before they start.⁸³

The debate continued into 1955. In January, Wilson wrote Eisenhower to formally request an outline of the President's guidance on force structure and personnel levels. "I have found so much value in the views underlying your decisions as to the personnel strengths of Services," he wrote "that I wonder if you would give me the gist of them in written form."⁸⁴

Eisenhower, who was becoming increasingly frustrated with Wilson's inability to manage controversial issues, quickly and patiently replied by listing four basic considerations:

First, the threat to our security is a continuing and many-sided one--there is, so far as we can determine, no single critical 'danger date' and no single form of enemy action to which we could soundly gear all our defense preparations. We will never commit aggression, but we must always be ready to defeat it.

Second, true security for our country must be founded on a strong and expanding economy, readily convertible to the tasks of war.

Third, because scientific progress exerts a constantly increasing influence upon the character and conduct of war, and because America's most precious possession is the lives of her citizens, we should base our security upon military formations which make maximum use of science and technology in order to minimize numbers in men.

⁸³Ibid, pp. 192-197.

⁸⁴Secretary of Defense Letter to the President, 3 January, 1955, DDE/AWF, Administration Series, Box 40, Wilson, Chas. 1955.

Fourth, due to the destructiveness of modern weapons and the increasing efficiency of long-range bombing aircraft, the United States has reason for the first time in its history, to be deeply concerned over the serious effects which a sudden attack could conceivably inflict upon our country.

"It is, of course obvious that defensive forces in American are maintained to defend a way of life", Eisenhower continued, " They must be adequate for this purpose but must not become such an intolerable burden as to occasion loss of civilian morale and individual initiative ...(T)o build excessively under the impulse of fear could, in the long run, defeat our purposes by damaging the growth of our economy and eventually forcing it into regimented controls." To ensure public understanding of his views, (and to reinforce its significance to Wilson) Eisenhower publicly released Wilson's request and his reply.⁸⁵

Ridgway may have agreed with the Eisenhower's broader principles. He clearly did not agree with the means of implementing them. He did not openly or directly go public with his opposition. But his opposition was still known.

His Staff continued to argue in private and publish in public calls for an Army capable of fighting a limited war. Ridgway would make statements in opposition to the President's policies when asked, and members of Congress ensured that he was asked. What made these all the more embarrassing to the White House was Wilson and Radford's insistence that Ridgway and his colleagues on the JCS enthusiastically endorsed policies that they did not. On one occasion, Wilson even wrote one Service Chief who had bitterly opposed a budget proposal and voted

⁸⁵Letter from the President to Secretary of Defense, January 5, 1955, Ibid.

against it in private JCS deliberations, that he was "glad to see" the General's enthusiastic support for the proposal.⁸⁶

The White House relationship with Ridgway became so tense that in 1955, Ridgway was not appointed to a customary second term as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. Later, some historians would mistakenly write that Ridgway had resigned. In fact, Ridgway retired at the end of his term and the decision not to reappoint him was made by the White House and Wilson, not by Ridgway (Ridgway said he planned to retire in 1955 all along. However, it is not clear when he made this decision and what he would have done had Eisenhower and Wilson made a routine reappointment).⁸⁷

Ridgway's retirement came with one final blast. In his farewell letter to Secretary of Defense Wilson, Ridgway harshly criticized the New Look and Wilson's handling of the Department. Wilson immediately classified the letter to withhold it from public discussion. But the letter was leaked to the press and printed in full. With the letter now public, Ridgway felt free to release his version of events, doing so in a biography published in 1956.

Ridgway left behind an Army staff angry and demoralized over budget cuts. But the efforts to advance alternative positions did not end with Ridgway's retirement. When General Maxwell Taylor assumed the duties of Chief of Staff of the Army, his new staff was eager to continue the fight, and they were convinced that Taylor would do just that.

⁸⁶Gavin, Space Age, pp. 156-257.

⁸⁷Ambrose, President, pg 223-224, 234; Ridgway, Soldier, pp. 320, 323-341; Snyder, "New Look," pp. 486-491.

Enter Taylor and the Colonels

Members of the Army staff had been debating a response to the New Look for months when General Taylor arrived. First, formally in the Pentagon, then after hours in private homes and government quarters around Washington, DC, these young officers hammered out position papers, force structure proposals, and political strategies for advancing the Army's interests.

They had sought the help of Army General Officers, most notably the Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development, Lieutenant General James Gavin. They wanted to make their fight in public, taking a page from the success of the Admirals' Revolt in 1949.⁸⁸

Those urging a more aggressive strategy were the ones meeting privately after hours, often in secret for fear of reprisals by Radford and by the other Service staffs. One of the key leaders of this group was Colonel Donovan Yeuell. Others continued to write and debate, but insisted on doing so through official channels, during duty hours. Colonel Frank Sackton was one of many who had been willing to take public risks with his career by publishing articles in military journals, but was not willing to take part in secret, after hours sessions.⁸⁹

All of the Colonels were feeling pressure on the Army from a number of different directions. The most immediate pressure was a budgetary one. Pressures to cut costs by cutting force structure were not just coming from civilian decision makers, but from the other Services as well.

⁸⁸Forsythe, Seaman, Zais interviews, OH-MHI.

⁸⁹Ibid.; interviews with LTG (ret.) Frank Sackton.

The budget process had now taken on an competitive tone unfamiliar to the Army. It was not a matter of defense against domestic spending. Everyone agreed that America could no longer isolate itself and all agreed that there was a clearly definable military threat. It was a matter of who among the Services would get primacy for the mission of national defense. Each viewed the budget as a zero-sum game. For one to win, the other would have to lose.

The most aggressive of the other Services was the Air Force. Using a public relations strategy that played on the public fascination with a new technology, the Air Force touted the success of air power in World War II and highlighted their critical role in the delivery of nuclear weapons. They played to members of Congress, stressing the Air Force's importance in power projection, their cost efficiency, and their value to the civilian economy.⁹⁰

The driving issue for the Army staff was not domestic politics, but global threats. The nation had adopted Containment as a grand strategy. Under Truman, the approach to the spread of Communism had been what historian John Gaddis called "symmetric". Every specific threat would be met with a response in kind. This had been the policy in Greece, in Berlin, and ultimately in Korea. Each challenge would be answered.⁹¹

In certain circumstances, Eisenhower continued this policy at the lowest levels of conflict. In Iran and Guatemala, the United States moved to shut off a possible Communist victory before it could become a

⁹⁰Huntington, Defense, pp. 394-398.

⁹¹Gaddis, Strategies, pp.352-357.

significant military challenge. Eisenhower was not willing to carry this symmetric response beyond these low level threats.

Meeting a more developed military threat, as we had done in Korea and as we were asked to do in Indochina, required a significant cost. That cost could be measured in economic terms. The diversion of assets from the civilian economy, the build up of military manpower at the expense of agriculture and industry, and the strain on the budget were costs the President was not willing to pay.

The Colonels, some of them fresh from Ivy League graduate study, disagreed. The New Look was a policy doomed to fail on several levels. It was as economically futile as Eisenhower feared the costs of a strong Army might be. Why invest all those resources to say, in essence, the only inevitable form of warfare is nuclear? The Colonels thought this was naive. It was politically and militarily unsound to believe that strategic nuclear weapons would be used to solve low level conflict.⁹²

Furthermore, it was inevitable that Communist victories in these low level conflicts would embolden them to escalate their efforts. America's inability to respond to this escalation (unless it was truly willing to risk nuclear war) would only serve to demoralize important allies. This further undercut the New Look by weakening the ability to rely on local forces. The only logical message to take from massive retaliation was an American view of the inevitability of strategic nuclear war. Was this the best way to maintain peace and stability while upholding the primacy of American interests?⁹³

⁹²Gavin, Hamlett, Forsythe, Ridgway, Taylor OH-MHI; Halperin, Limited War (1962).

⁹³Ibid.; James D. Atkinson and Donovan P. Yeuell, "Must We Have World War III?," Proceedings of The U.S. Naval Institute, Vol. 82, No. 7, pp.711-721.

There was also a domestic political dimension of the Army's worries. In 1954, Senator McCarthy had targeted the Army for investigation. The underlying issue was a personal attack by McCarthy as revenge for the failure of one his former staff members to receive favorable treatment when drafted into the Army. The hearings preceded McCarthy's ultimate censure by the Senate and his fall from power, but the wounds inflicted had not gone away.⁹⁴

First, McCarthy was more a symptom than a cause. He had tapped into a strong anti-Communist feeling as a means to a political end. He was not the only American politician practicing this brand of politics. If he had raised suspicions about the Army's loyalty, they were not ended with the resolution of this particular case or even with his death.⁹⁵

To compound matters, President Eisenhower's "hands off" policy toward McCarthy had extended into this case. This in spite of the fact that McCarthy was attacking the organization Eisenhower had served and the friends he had served with. Eisenhower's objective (as it had been throughout McCarthy's career) was to avoid dignifying or legitimizing McCarthy by entering into public debate with him. In private, Eisenhower was furious, but his public silence further demoralized the Army.⁹⁶

To the Army the only alternative to organizational irrelevance was a policy that responded to the threat by offering an appropriate option

⁹⁴Ambrose, President, pp. 163-171, 186-189.

⁹⁵Brodie, War and Politics, pp. 207-208; Halbertam, Best, pp. 606-607; Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986) pg. 583; Gaddis, Strategies, pp. 234, 242.

⁹⁶Ambrose, President, pp. 186-189; John Taylor, Sword and Pen, p. 171.

other than reliance on strategic air power. As the Colonels continued to study and debate, the option emerged. First, they felt they had to counter the view that the Air Force was capable of independently meeting their nation's security requirements. Then, they had to make the case for the Army's capabilities. The specific capabilities to be highlighted were the Army's missile program and the development of tactical nuclear weapons. These capabilities could be utilized by a mobile Army, equipped with tactical nuclear weapons and reinforced with Army missiles capable of both meeting the threat from Soviet bombers and capable of offensive actions in support of forward deployed units.⁹⁷

The policy developed, it was now a matter of implementing it. But first, the new Chief of Staff had to be brought on board. Taylor had already indicated his support for a flexible force capable of deploying rapidly and applying the advantages of American military technology. In so doing, he had cited Eisenhower's own call to "...keep in our armed forces balance and flexibility adequate for our purposes and objectives."⁹⁸

The Colonels presented their case to the Chief of Staff during a speaking tour in November and December of 1955. Colonel Yeuell was manifested for the trip and used the occasion to lobby Taylor on the Colonels' proposals. Taylor agreed in principle, but expressed concerns about the tactics. What would be the results of failure? The results

⁹⁷While the rational argument can be made that the Army was never actually threatened with extinction during this period, the perception of those on the Army staff was a greater driving force than logic. Note, for example, the language of Barksdale Hamlett, who discusses the "rape" of the Army. Hamlett, OH-MHI.

⁹⁸Maxwell Taylor "Proposed letter to all officers of the Army...", 18 October, 1955, Maxwell D. Taylor Papers, National Defense University (hereafter MDT-NDU), Box 6, File 1, Tab O; Address By General Maxwell D. Taylor, National Guard Association, New Orleans Louisiana, 19 October, 1955, MDT-NDU, Box 5a, Speech File, File 1.

of not trying, Yeuell argued, could be far worse for the Army than trying and failing. Taylor approved the proposal, but still expressed caution on the tactics. If the Colonels crossed the line of appropriate actions, or if their efforts generated unmanageable political problems, they were on their own.⁹⁹

In agreeing with the Colonels, Taylor was at odds with the guidance given to him by Eisenhower in June. Eisenhower had welcomed Taylor to his new duties as Chief of Staff and had stressed the importance of interService teamwork.¹⁰⁰ Now Taylor was on a collision course with the Air Force and Secretary of Defense Wilson

In January of 1956, the informal group of staff officers formally became the Coordination Group. The Group's duties included assisting Taylor "...in the development and evaluation of long-range strategic plans.". Their political charter was broad but unspecified. They worked directly for the Chief of Staff, reporting to BG William Westmoreland, Taylor's Secretary of the General Staff (SGS).¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Memorandum For General Taylor, Subject: Itinerary for Trip, 29 November 1955, MDT-NDU, Box 8, Folder D/4, Itineraries and Trips; Forsythe, OH-MHI, Zais, OH-MHI; Gavin, OH-MHI, Gavin was also manifested on this trip. The personal and professional animosity between the two airborne generals stretched back over 30 years at this point. Most of Gavin's recollections of The Revolt and Taylor's role correlate with Halberstam's account. On some points, such as the professional survival of the Colonels, Gavin's account is at odds with those of all the other participants.; Halberstam, Best, pp. 573-379.

¹⁰⁰Memorandum of Conference with the President, General Taylor, 29 June 1955, DDE-AWF, Ann Whitman Diaries (hereafter AWD), Box 6, 7/55 (5). Virtually all the memoranda cited here were the result of records kept by the President's personal secretary, Ann Whitman, and his Special Assistant, Colonel Andrew Goodpaster. Both kept extensive records. Goodpaster's detailed notes (often reviewed for accuracy by Eisenhower) are especially useful. My thanks to GEN Goodpaster for directing me to particularly valuable documents which he felt best exemplified Eisenhower's views and the events. Letter to Author, April 12, 1994.

¹⁰¹Hewes, Root To McNamara, pp. 239-241; Westmoreland, OH-MHI.

The Coordination Group was not a unique organization. There was a counterpart organization on the Navy staff. Like the Coordination Group, it was kept out of the public spotlight, but it was deeply involved in the Navy's political battles for budget. ¹⁰²

The group had its first challenge within a matter of days. On January 16, the President sent his FY 1957 budget message to Congress with an increase in defense spending. The Army would increase by one division to 19, but the increase would come from "more efficient utilization of personnel." Meanwhile, the Air Force increased personnel by 20,000 and increased the number of wings from 131 to 137. Money would be spent to procure advanced aircraft for both the Navy and Air Force, while the Army procurement went to light aircraft and helicopters.¹⁰³

One month earlier the numbers had been higher. For all but one Service there would be significant personnel increases, but the increases would be less than originally recommended and approved. The one loser was the Army, with a total increase of only 200 personnel.¹⁰⁴

The same day the President's budget message was reported in the New York Times, a sidebar article to the page one story reported now retired General Ridgway's attack on cutting ground troops in favor of air power. Ridgway further accused Eisenhower and Wilson of misrepresenting his recommendations. Citing a 1954 statement by Wilson

¹⁰²Vincent Davis, The Admirals Lobby, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967) pp. 284-303 : Huntington, Defense, pp. 385-394.

¹⁰³"Balanced Budget Raises Spending To 65.9 Billion; 42.4 Billion For Security," The New York Times, 17 January, 1956, sec. 1, pg A1.

¹⁰⁴Memorandum For The Secretary of The Army (et al), Subject: Force Levels and Authorized Personnel Ceilings for Fiscal Year 1957, December 5, 1955, RG 218, Box 27, NA.

that the Chiefs had "unanimously recommend the 1955 defense budget, Ridgway stated that he had "most emphatically" not concurred.¹⁰⁵

Ridgway's attacks fortuitously appeared the same week as vigorous attacks by Senate Democrats on Secretary of State Dulles' advocacy of "brinkmanship." Massive retaliation worked as a deterrent, he argued, because America was willing to go to the brink of nuclear war. Certainly, there was a risk of crossing the line. But we would "take chances for peace just as (we) must take chances in war," Dulles told Life Magazine.¹⁰⁶ The idea of taking risks in diplomacy was not new. The idea of taking so dangerous and irreversible a risk with nuclear weapons, however, was new and frightening.

Just how were foreign and defense policy decisions being made, observers asked? The President, now on the offensive, responded by refusing to comment on specific policy decisions. He did reaffirm faith in Dulles, saying his views were misrepresented. He also answered Ridgway's charges by denying that domestic politics influenced his military budget recommendations.¹⁰⁷

Making a pointed reference to his own military experience, Eisenhower struck back at his administration's critics. He noted that he had been receiving a lot of military advice since 1940. "If I had

¹⁰⁵"Ridgway Challenges President on Troops," The New York Times, 17 January 1956, sec. 1, p. A1.

¹⁰⁶"Democrats Press Attack on Dulles," The New York Times, 19 January 1956, sec. 1, p. A1; "Eisenhower's Problem," The New York Times, 19 January, 1956, sec. 1, p. A24; Gaddis, Strategies, pp. 151-152; The basis for much of Dulles policies can be found in his original "massive retaliation" speech, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 30, No. 761 (January 25, 1954).

¹⁰⁷"Eisenhower Warns G.O.P. Not To Pin All On One Man; States Faith in Dulles," The New York Times, 20 January 1956, sec 1, p. A1; "President Denies Ridgway Charges," The New York Times, 20 January 1956, sec. 1, p. A1; "Transcript of First Full-Dress News Conference Held by the President Since August 4," The New York Times, 20 January 1956, sec. 1. p. A10.

listened to all of the advice I got during those years," said Eisenhower, "there never would have been a plan for crossing the (English) Channel." He then referred further questions on the defense budget to the Pentagon.¹⁰⁸

Eisenhower's response to these criticisms had implications beyond the defense debate. There was broader concern about Eisenhower's ability to govern. Always under attack for a management style that seemed to defer the important judgments to subordinates acting without clear guidance, Eisenhower's control of the government was now being scrutinized in light of his physical capabilities.

In September 1955, Eisenhower had a heart attack and there was still speculation about his health. He had not made a final decision on running for a second term. Democrats were already gearing up for the 1956 election, emboldened by the Republican losses in the 1954 Congressional elections which had ended the GOP control of both the House and Senate.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, the Army and Air Force continued to exchange public relations volleys. In a lengthy article in U.S. News and World Report published in February of that year, Taylor outlined more of the positive alternative. The atomic Army (if properly funded and manned) was an important part of America's security. Sidestepping direct criticism of force cuts to date, Taylor stressed the Army's strengths in fighting in conflicts at any level. He mentioned the Army's development of missiles (something the Air Force had hoped to keep under its control). The

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ambrose, President, pp. 270-281, 285-296; "Eisenhower Warns GOP...", NYT, Ibid; "The New President", The New York Times, 20 January 1956, sec 1, pg 11.

article reflected a confident Army preparing to meet the challenges of the nuclear era.¹¹⁰ This was part of the Coordination Group's initiative. They would undercut the other Services indirectly, and allow Taylor to provide a positive, Army alternative to massive retaliation

But the Army was not the only one on the offensive. The Air Force was featured in a series of TIME magazine articles in March. This high technology armed Services represented "the most powerful striking force on earth,". Pictures of bombers, early warning radar, fighter pilots, and transport aircraft showed a force ready to defend the nation's interest around the globe. Was the Air Force ready to meet the Russian's in battle? Air Force Chief of Staff General Nathan Twining gave a qualified "yes." "The greater our margin of superiority, the more quickly we could win the air battle."¹¹¹ Friends in Congress also furthered the Air Force agenda. Former Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington was now a Senator.

The continuing interService debate did not escape Eisenhower's notice. On February 10, the President met with the Joint Chiefs. His purpose, he said was to stress the importance to their function as a "corporate body." They must "...form the union between the military establishment and our country as a whole, its public, its government, etc." They had a number of positive responsibilities, he continued to include the development of doctrine. Their Chief served as his military

¹¹⁰"And Now-The Atomic Army: Exclusive Interview with General Maxwell D. Taylor," U.S. News and World Reports, 3 February 1956, pp. 64-73; In an earlier press conference, Taylor had discussed the Army's progress toward developing a missile with 1500 mile range. "Armed Forces: 1,500 Missile," Time, 23 January 1956, p 17. .

¹¹¹"The Nation's Youngest Service Has Entered the Supersonic Age," Time, 5 March 1956, pp. 56-65.

advisor, but all had the opportunity to meet with the President individually anytime they wished.¹¹²

But as a corporate body, they had a responsibility "...to hammer out..." corporate ideas. One thing they must avoid is interService squabbling. They were not advocates for their Service. They were to provide a collective response. He urged them to get away from Washington for a week without their staffs. They should develop a basic military philosophy. He added that in so doing "...they should try to avoid trick words like 'new look'".¹¹³

When Taylor said it would be useful to "meet with the President and hear his philosophy," (though there was little about his philosophy that Eisenhower had already said). Eisenhower turned the request back on the Chiefs. "The President said the problem is rather to get the Chiefs to work out this philosophy, knowing generally how the President looks at the problem...(They) should bring to him the truths they discover and convince him as to their philosophy." But whatever they bring him, he said "...should be a composite approach made for the benefit of the President and the National Security Council."¹¹⁴

The Chiefs failed to meet his requirements. After a week long conference in Puerto Rico, Radford and Wilson presented a preliminary report of their findings to Eisenhower. The President's initial

¹¹²Memorandum For Record, Conference of Joint Chiefs of Staff with the President, 10 February 1956, White House Office Files (WHOF), Office of the Staff Secretary (OSS), Subject Series (SS), Department of Defense Sub Series (DODSS), Box 4, File JCS (2), 1-4/56, DDE; In a follow up memo to Radford, Goodpaster cites Eisenhower's desire that the Chiefs serve as "mentors" to the President on military matters. He concludes by stressing the President's belief that the Chiefs' principal role is the development of doctrine. In his elaboration he discusses operations and tactics, but fails to mention any role for the Chiefs in the development of strategy.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

response to their gloomy report was "...that he regretted that the Chiefs of Staff were not 'big enough' to look at the whole problem, the whole sweep of the country's economy in conjunction with their particular problem."¹¹⁵

The report, he said gave "...a very dark picture. If this is what we face, it would imply that we should go to field conditions, declare an emergency, increase the military budget, and even go to a garrison state." In his discussions with Wilson, Eisenhower complained that the report reflected a worsening of the military situation during Eisenhower's term. He felt this was not an accurate assessment. He also stressed the importance of taking a broader look at the world situation, at economic aid as a security tool, and at what Eisenhower called "the domestic military situation, including the place and role of missiles."¹¹⁶

He gave Radford and Wilson the outline for a revised report organized into three sections. The first would be the domestic military situation to include missiles, present military capabilities, and force levels. Next would be the world military situation, and finally "the whole situation in the free world." Eisenhower concluded by urging the Chiefs "...to take the same attitude toward the importance of a sound economy as he knows Admiral Radford does--to recognize it as a fundamental element of over-all U.S security strength."¹¹⁷

Two days later, the Chiefs met with Eisenhower and Wilson. Radford told the President that the Chiefs had been "...a little

¹¹⁵Diary, March 13, 1956, AWF-AWD, Box 8, 3/56 (2), DDE; Memorandum of Conference with the President, March 13, 1956, AW-DDE Diary, Box 13, March 56, Goodpaster, DDE.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

staggered..." by the requirements Eisenhower had placed on the Chiefs. His outline for revisions, passed to Radford and Wilson at the March 13 meeting, had "...embraced everything in the military sphere..."¹¹⁸

But the President insisted he did not want a lengthy report, "...simply their conclusion on the major elements under various headings, and he thought the outline set out what would have to be considered in reaching a judgment as to the military program..." The first section would simply consist of bringing past calculations up to date. The second and third section should be done from the perspective of "...a well-informed observer..." of the world situation and could be supplemented by coordination with the State Department. He was not asking for specific force levels or programs.¹¹⁹

The records of the conference seem to indicate two groups of people talking past each other. Eisenhower urged the Chiefs to look at such issues as "...international movements of bank..." funds. Radford stated that the JCS thought the problem facing the United States "...is not primarily military," but then provided examples that include the difficulties of joint planning with alliances and mutual defense treaties. The Chiefs agreed to go back to the drawing board.¹²⁰

This would appear to have been a unique opportunity for The Coordination Group. Their mission was long-range strategic planning. Many of them professed to be Clauswitzian in their approach. What better way to demonstrate the validity of their views and to meet the President's requirements than to craft a role for the Army that

¹¹⁸Memorandum of Conference with the President, March 15, 1956, AWF-DDE Dairy, Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

incorporated the broader elements of the international environment, the economy, and domestic politics?

Changes were also taking place that affected the nature of the threat. Stalin was dead and after a lengthy internal political struggle, Nikita Krushchev had emerged as the new leader of the Soviet Union. Among his first acts was the discrediting of much that had occurred during the Stalinist Era. War was no longer an inevitable outcome of the conflict between Communism and Capitalism. Internal development was now the Soviet Government's priority.¹²¹

In other parts of the world, South Vietnam seemed to have stabilized and President Ngo Dinh Diem's party had won in relatively peaceful elections. A pro-western coalition had won elections in Greece. Meanwhile China, was concentrating on internal affairs.¹²² The U.S. had established alliances in almost every region of the world, putting the emphasis on collective security at the local level where Eisenhower consistently felt it should be. The World was not at peace, but events bolstered Eisenhower's contention that the world situation had improved, not worsened, in the three years of his administration.

But there was nothing forthcoming from the Colonels or their sister Service counterparts. Secretary of State Dulles was often criticized for his unyielding (and some felt naive) moralistic approach to foreign policy. "Massive Retaliation" was the result of those belief systems.¹²³ But the alternatives presented by the Colonels were no less

¹²¹Ambrose, President, pg 328; "Russia: The New Line," Time, 5 March 1956, pp 25-26.

¹²²"South Vietnam: Victory for Diem," Time, 19 March 1956, pg. 40.; "Greece: I Stand Alone," Time, 5 March 1956, pg .26; "China: High Tide of Terror," Time, 5 March 1956, pp. 28-30.

¹²³An example of this critique is Townsend Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

a product of fixed belief systems. They had not adhered to Eisenhower's admonishment to discard the old "truths" that no longer applied and to approach their mission without adherence to outdated ideas.

The Army's focus continued to be on large scale, conventional operations by forces armed with tactical nuclear weapons. If the nuclear balance and overwhelming Soviet manpower superiority made it unlikely that the U.S. and would face the Soviet Armies without NATO allies, the Army saw other alternatives for large American forces. They could be called on to support the forces of other nation's threatened by Communist subversion or attack. They might face Soviets in theaters other than Europe. The U.S., they argued, need a strong, flexible force¹²⁴

Eisenhower's frustration grew as the sectarian efforts of the Services continued. The first target of his unhappiness was Wilson. Eisenhower had appointed him because of his strong track record as President of General Motors. He expected decisive and effective leadership from Wilson, but he felt Wilson was not providing it. On issue after issue, Wilson would defer on significant decision to the President, in spite of the President's insistence that Wilson take charge.¹²⁵

Meanwhile the Chiefs felt that Wilson was inattentive and unresponsive to the needs and recommendations of the Services. Radford's views were consistent with the Presidents, but inspite of his clear willingness to wield his influence, he was not the unbiased

¹²⁴This approach is consistent with the recurring Army view of its roles and missions. It is best defined in Krepinevich, Army and Vietnam, pp. 4-5.

¹²⁵Ambrose, President, pp. 223, 299, 345.

arbiter and manager of the bureaucracy. That role was supposed to be Wilson's.

On the 26 of March, Eisenhower drafted a memo for Wilson emphasizing his disappointment in the Chiefs. They had failed to come to terms in Puerto Rico. They had also failed to respond to earlier calls by Eisenhower for specific programs to cut civilian personnel and to reduce overall defense spending. Noting that the Bureau of the Budget had just sought his approval for a \$50 million Supplementary Appropriation for FY 1956, Eisenhower said, "It seems to me that it is out of order to be approving such recommendations, until the NSC has considered the Chief of Staff's report that I asked for some time ago..."¹²⁶

The military continued to meet every request for recommendations with a demand for more money, wrote Eisenhower. "It seems odd that such recommendations are so rarely accompanied by a suggestion that money could be saved in some of our great and complex logistic or administrative operations." The changes in weapons and technology should have brought a reduction in personnel. "Fire power has been miraculously increased, but unit and overall strength remains high."¹²⁷

A week later, the Colonels' activities were brought to Eisenhower's attention by Radford in a conference with the Chiefs. He began by telling the President that "...unless brought under control, a situation may develop in which the Services are involved in increasing public disagreement among themselves." Unable to resolve them among themselves, the Chiefs had asked Wilson to either make a decision or

¹²⁶Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 20 March 1956 (draft), AWF-DDE, Draft Series, Box 3, Drafts, 1-5/56 (2) DDE.

¹²⁷Ibid.

issue clarifying guidance on several points in recent months (unstated was the fact that Wilson had been unwilling or unable to do so. He was not present at this meeting). The Chiefs were now asking the President for answers they could not get from the Secretary of Defense. The memo of that meeting outlines the issues of concern.¹²⁸

The first is whether we will use atomic weapons in war. There is still reluctance in some quarters to plan on this basis. In actual fact, we are already largely committed as regards our force structure, and will become increasingly so as time goes on.

A second question is that of roles and missions of the individual Services as applied to guided missiles.

A third question is a desire by the Army to have more control over its reconnaissance.

A fourth is the increasingly aggressive public relations policy of the Services, particularly the Army, but spreading to others.¹²⁹

(This last point was not consistent with the record. The New York Times index from January 2 to June 25, 1956 shows 16 entries for the Air Force, 5 for the Navy, and 2 for the Army. Only one of those Army entries was dated before the March 30 conference.)¹³⁰

The President was quick to condemn "competitive publicity." It should be stopped and it was "...the responsibility of the Service Chiefs to give necessary instruction to public relations officers to accomplish this." Once again, he stressed the importance of the Chiefs acting not as individual Service advocates but as military experts and advisors, capable of looking at the big picture. Once again, he

¹²⁸Memorandum of Conference with the President, 30 March 1956, AWF-DDE Diary, Box 15, 4/56 (Goodpaster), DDE.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰The New York Times Index, LXVII, January 2-June 25, 1956, inclusive, p. 50.

stressed the importance of cooperation among the Services and the resolution of problems.¹³¹

Meanwhile, Eisenhower told the Generals that his "...door is open to them at any time." They could accompany Radford on his regular meetings, or visit the President individually. Their opinions would not be stifled in the debate process. But once the decision was made, public debate should stop. Success could only be achieved by pulling together.¹³²

To that same end, Eisenhower said that Wilson should appoint one person to head all missile programs. He had accepted recommendations by scientists that four different missile programs--doled out to different Services--continue development. But "...one man in the missile field ...should 'do the talking'".¹³³

Finally, as he had on numerous occasions in the past, Eisenhower stressed the importance of a sound domestic economy to national security. "It is the nature of our Government that everyone, except for a thin layer at the top, is working, knowingly or unknowingly, to damage our economy," he said. "the reason being that they see the need for more and more resources for their own Service or agency, and the valuable results that can be achieved through added effort in their own particular element."¹³⁴

"Unless there is someone who brings all of these together, the net effect is to create burdens which could sap the strength of our economic system," Eisenhower explained." Similarly, there are great pressures on

¹³¹Memo of Conference, 30 March 1956, Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid.

the military program from every particular element, and the catalytic factor provided by the Press and Congress might make it explode."¹³⁵

A sound economy was the key to true security, said Eisenhower. Rapid buildups and fluctuations in spending have a damaging effect. Eisenhower had often cited this as a weaknesses of Truman's "year of maximum danger" approach.¹³⁶

None of these points, (with the exception of the single head of the missile program) should have been a surprise to the Chiefs. They represented a repetition of Eisenhower's underlying philosophy for the previous three years. They had received written guidance on numerous occasions outlining these principles. Perhaps this time it would get through.

On the 17th of April, the Chiefs presented their report. It stressed the importance of modernizing the forces and adapting them to the atomic battlefield. The Army's portion stressed the importance of mobility, flexibility, and firepower. That firepower would come from a modern missile system capable of replacing most conventional artillery.¹³⁷

The report did not address Eisenhower's concern about the economy. The next day, Radford went to the White House to discuss the report. Eisenhower said that it demonstrated a better grasp of the military situation, even if it did not deal completely with all the subjects. He

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Memorandum for the President, Subject: Military and Other Requirments for National Security, 17 April 1956, AWF, Administration Series (AdS), Box 29, Radford (1), DDE.

then asked Radford how the Chiefs were cooperating with each other. He was particularly concerned with the Army's attitude.¹³⁸

Radford replied that the Army's problem was one of morale. Eisenhower agreed. He cited a conversation with his son, himself a West Point Graduate and serving Army Officer, about the subject of current Army doctrine. John Eisenhower had told his father that the lack of a "definite and permanent mission has left them somewhat unsatisfied and even bewildered."¹³⁹

Radford countered that he had tried to tell the Army "...that they have a great future in terms of mobile warfare." The problem, he thought, was their resistance to restructuring forces based on the "atomic concept."¹⁴⁰ Radford's statement demonstrated his own lack of understanding of the Army's position. He was either not listening to or misrepresenting Army proposals.

The Army had been talking about the importance of adapting to "the atomic concept." A cornerstone of the Army's position on limited war had been the development and employment of tactical nuclear weapons. The Coordination Group was also beginning work on proposals to reorganize Army division to better meet the demands of the atomic battlefield.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile the Air Force efforts at "competitive publicity" began to take the spotlight. Eisenhower had commented to Radford that Air Force publicity about new high speed aircraft was an example of the kind

¹³⁸Memorandum of Conference with the President, 18 April 1956, AWF-DDE Diary, Box 15, 4/56, Goodpaster, DDE.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹"The Atomic Army", USN&WR, *ibid.*; Gavin, OH-MHI; Sackton, "Changing Nature of War, " *Ibid.*

of rivalry for public attention that concerned him.¹⁴² That was mild, however, compared to the combined efforts of General Curtis LeMay, Commander of Strategic Air Command and Senator Stuart Symington (D-MO), former Secretary of the Air Force.

Testifying before Symington's Senate Armed Services Subcommittee, (and working from prepared answers to questions provided in advance to LeMay by the subcommittee) LeMay painted a grim picture of slipping SAC readiness and increasing Soviet capabilities that may have already surpassed those of the U.S. The answer was an increase in SAC appropriations that could mean an increase of almost \$55 million in the Air Force budget.¹⁴³

Administration officials like Wilson were quick to downplay LeMay's concerns. Meanwhile, the press noted that the significant threat that LeMay feared was not the Soviets, but an Army with ballistic missiles and a nuclear capable Navy. The Air Force had enjoyed both public attention and fiscal superiority. Now there was a change that might come to an end.¹⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the Army was presenting a positive proposal that encompassed all the Services and provided a role for the Army. Prepared by the Coordination Group, it was introduced by Taylor in speeches around the nation. The proposal was entitled "A National Military Program." It stressed the importance of the nuclear deterrent and America's strategic air capabilities. The program recognized that

¹⁴²Memo, 18 April, Ibid, DDE.

¹⁴³"The Nation: Defense Under Fire," Time, 14 May 1956, p. 27.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

military means were meant to work hand in hand with the nations political, economic, and diplomatic efforts.¹⁴⁵

Taylor's speeches also acknowledged the bi-polar realities of the Cold War, but warned that the balance of nuclear weapons was not a guarantee of peace. Communist aggression would still occur, but in different forms. Subversion, local conflicts and brush fire wars would threaten U.S. interests and test resolve. These were not mission for strategic nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁶

The nation requires rapidly deployable forces. We also need to continue military assistance efforts to bolster the military capabilities of allied armies. But above all, Taylor argued, we need to ensure a military posture that is not over reliant on any single capability. "... (D)etterrence must be tri-dimensional in nature. It must exist on the ground, in the air, and on the sea--we can accept no chink in our armor of deterrence."¹⁴⁷

Throughout The Coordination Group's proposal, Eisenhower's comments on balanced security were included. There were no direct attacks on other Services. In fact, their contributions to national defense were praised.¹⁴⁸ If they were not fully complying with Eisenhower's guidance, they were at least paying a greater degree of lip Service to it.

¹⁴⁵Address By General Maxwell D. Taylor, To The Council on Foreign Relations, New York, NY May 14, 1956, Box 4/D, Selected Speeches ,MDT-NDU; Address By General Maxwell D. Taylor, To The Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, May 18, 1956, Box 5/C, Number 60, Speech File No. 3, MDT-NDU.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

If The Coordination Group had confined itself to this kind of advocacy, the Revolt might never have occurred. All evidence was that Eisenhower was willing to tolerate it (in spite of his state frustration) so long as the Services did not take each other on directly. the Navy, for example, had been quietly building its nuclear capability without resorting to public attacks on the Air Force and Army.

But The Coordination Group did not limit itself to positive advocacy. Still convinced that the Air Force was out command even more of the budget (and certainly not comforted by LeMay's testimony) the Coordination Group thought it was necessary to challenge the belief that air power was a decisive factor on the battlefield.

As Taylor presented the positive proposals, the members of the Coordination Group prepared to circulate a number of reports including one provocatively titled "A Decade of Insecurity Through Airpower." Members of the Coordination Group contacted sympathetic reporters and provided documents. Meanwhile the Air Force began to counterattack. They also had sympathetic reporters and stories critical of the Army's missile program began to appear. The attacks were not limited to the Army. Air Force reports also questioned the effectiveness of carrier based aircraft.¹⁴⁹

The conflict continued to escalate. At one point, two Air Force officers reportedly put on Army uniforms and walked through Army offices in Pentagon. Army Magazine, the publication of the Association of the

¹⁴⁹"Military Forces Split By Conflict on Arms Policies," The New York Times, 19 May 1956, sec A, pg A1; "Psychological Warfare," Time, 28 May 1956, p. 22; "Armed Forces: Charlie's Hurricane," Time, 4 June 1956, pp.19-23.

United States Army (AUSA), prepared a June issue attacking the Air Force for "technological obsolescence."¹⁵⁰

The last straw came on May 21, the Monday after Armed Forces Day. The New York Times front page stories about America's successful H-bomb tests were over shadowed by a story headlined "Air Force Calls Army Nike Unfit to Guard Nation; Questions Whether Missile Can Down Guided Bombs or High-Altitude Planes."¹⁵¹ That afternoon, with all the Services now in open and pitched battle with each other, Wilson called a press conference. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Service Secretaries appeared before the Pentagon Press Corps.¹⁵²

Wilson blamed the controversy on the press and on staff papers "...that reflect the views of individuals who worked on them and not necessarily the approved policies of the Services." Each of the Service Chiefs endorsed Wilson's remarks, reaffirmed their opposition to harmful inter-Service rivalry, and disavowed reports critical of their sister Services. Secretary of the Air Force Donald A. Quarles said, "I can only say for the Air Force that we hope if we have to carry an attack against another country, it will not be defended by weapons as potent as the Nike." Air Force Chief of Staff General Nathan Twining disavowed a document critical of the capabilities of Navy carriers.¹⁵³

Many of the reporters had been the recipients of these documents and reports. They had been assured by Service staffers that they

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹"Air Force Calls Army Nike Unfit to Guard Nation," The New York Times, 21 May 1956, sec.A, p. A1.

¹⁵²"Wilson Marshalls Service Chiefs to Decry Rivalry," The New York Times, 22 May 1956, sec A, pg. A1; "Transcript of News Conference Held by Wilson and His Military and Civilian Aides," The New York Times, 22 May 1956, sec. A, p. A14.

¹⁵³Ibid.

represented the views of the Chiefs. "General Taylor," one reporter asked, "since there seems to be so much harmony and only some few ruffles of dissent, can you explain sir, why some Colonels--and I have good reason to believe that they were in that category saw fit last week to disseminate documents which they purported to be official documents representing Army views which are contrary to the accepted views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?"¹⁵⁴

"First," said Taylor "I would like to know who the Colonels are." "I don't know, sir," the reporter interjected. "Number two," Taylor continued, let me make a very sharp distinction between the few you can get in the hall of the Pentagon. You can probably get 1,000 views, They are not official." Taylor was clearly being very careful in choosing his words. "They are not the views of the Army unless I recommend them and the Secretary approves them. Hence I could say with only a cursory glance at the paper I have been reading that I disavow they are the views of the Army."¹⁵⁵

Next it was, the Air Force's turn. "Could the Defense Department approve the issuance of a public relations document which instructs Air Force public relations men to 'flood the public with facts and to lay off during an election year because politics are unreasonable and ruthless competitors'?(sic) That is a direct quote, General Twining, from a document that was disseminated from your general area." Secretary Quarles referred to the document as "...a pep talk in a sales talk...."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

Asked about how he intended to, " ...either end this mutiny or prevent its recurrence," Taylor said his best course of action was to "...speak clearly and unmistakably the views of the Army." Would there be any investigation about leaked documents and what action would be taken against those deemed responsible? Wilson answered "I would have to first find out what they did and who they are. I could and would not prejudge the case." Taylor had one final comment. "I would just like to nail one thing. There is no mutiny or revolt in the Army."¹⁵⁷

As Taylor spoke, his SGS, BG Westmoreland, was in the process of reassigning the members of the Coordination Group. Their offices and files were sealed. They were told not to come to the office. Some were contacted by reporters at home. One Colonel heatedly denied to a reporter that he was a source of leaked documents critical of the Air Force. He then passed two such documents to the reporter. Editorial writers and commentators discussed the controversy. Several said that the debate among the Services over national military policy was both healthy and beneficial.¹⁵⁸

The final word was Eisenhower's. The day after the Pentagon press conference, Wilson and Radford held their regular weekly meeting with the President and announced afterwards that the president was "...a bit unhappy..." about the fights among the Services. That same day the Army announced the successful test of a Nike missile.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Forsythe, OH-MHI; Halberstam, Best, pg. 578; "Armed Forces," Time, 4 June 1956, Ibid; Westmoreland, OH-MHI.

¹⁵⁹"President Vexed By Service Fight: Inquiry Slate," The New York Times, 23 May 1956, sec. A, p. A1; "Army Fires 2 Nikes in Test and Hits Target with One," The New York Times, 23 May 1956, sec. A, p. A1.

Other elements of Eisenhower's comprehensive approach to security were under fire as the House Foreign Affairs Committee cut more than \$1 billion in Foreign Aid legislation. Almost all of it came from military assistance programs, designed to build up local forces and thus limit the need for U.S. intervention.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on air power and the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on the military announced plans to conduct investigations and, if need be, hold hearings aimed at investigating issues raised in the interService squabble.¹⁶¹

On the morning of Wednesday the 23rd, Eisenhower and his staff conducted a pre-press conference briefing, reviewing possible press questions and developing answers. The interService fight was the tenth issue on the list of those discussed. Eight of the first nine were significant foreign policy issues to include reported cuts in the Soviet military, Egypt's recognition of Red China, and the recent Congressional cuts in foreign aid.¹⁶²

The President told his staff members he was weary of the squabble and noted that the two Senate subcommittees planned to investigate the issues raised. He took note of the fact that Symington had himself been part of an earlier fight while Secretary of the Air Force. Defying the orders of then Defense Secretary Forrestal, Symington had given a speech in favor of the B-36 bomber; an aircraft which the President noted

¹⁶⁰"Foreign Aid Bill Cut \$1,109,000,000 By House Group," The New York Times, 23 May 1956, sec. A, pg A1.

¹⁶¹"President Vexed," NYT, Ibid.

¹⁶²Pre-press Conference briefings, May 23 1956, AWF-AWD, Box 8, 5/56 (1), DDE.

"never proved useful." The President was firm about the leaking of documents to the press. Anyone who was guilty would be punished.¹⁶³

At the press conference later that morning, the President was more conciliatory. The reporters first questions were about the defense debate. The Services should fight for their point of view, Eisenhower said, but once policy is made, they had a positive obligation to obey. "We are going through a period where (sic) any sensible man can see is one of change," he explained, "of fluidity, where we are deserting doctrines that have long been held sacrosanct in the Services...Now if there weren't in this time a good strong argument among the Services, I would be frightened indeed."¹⁶⁴

But while subordinates have a duty to fight for their point of view before a decision is made, he said, they also have an obligation to loyally support the command decision once made. And what, he was asked, about Senators who say they have a duty to investigate where the money they appropriate is spent? "Well, if he carries out his duty, I am sure I will try to carry out mine."¹⁶⁵ In the opinion of The New York Times Editorial Board, "President Eisenhower has put into proper perspective and, it may be hoped, ended the kind of squabbling within our armed forces that has disturbed our nation."¹⁶⁶

The squabbling was far from over.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴"Eisenhower Backs Service Debates But Sets Limits," The New York Times, 24 May 1956, sec. A, pg A1; "Transcript of Eisenhower's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Matters," The New York Times, 24 May 1956, sec. A, pg. A1; Official White House Transcript of President Eisenhower's Press and Radio Conference #88, May 23, 1956, AWF-Press Conference Series, Box 4, Press Conference 5/23/56.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶"The Military Perspective," The New York Times, 24 May 1956, sec. a, pg A30.

CHAPTER IV.

EPILOGUE

BUSINESS AS USUAL

The Battle Continues

The revolt had been front page news all week. The attention had focused primarily on Army criticism of the Air Force and Air Force counter criticism of the Army. The Navy had been relatively unscathed. By happy coincidence, that cover story in the May 21 edition of TIME Magazine was a lengthy, glowing report on "The U.S. Navy in the Atomic Age".¹⁶⁷

The day after Eisenhower's press conference, Taylor and Radford met with the President to discuss another split in defense policy. The Army and the Marines were in disagreement with the Air Force, the Navy, and Radford on an issue central to all program design, funding, and force planning. The Army and Marines felt that while thermonuclear war was feasible, it was not likely to be the result of deliberate actions by either superpower. The deterrent value of both nations' weapons stockpiles was such that any such war would be "backed into." Therefore, Taylor argued (as had Eisenhower's own NSC) the most likely war in the foreseeable future would be a small war.¹⁶⁸

The Air Force and the Navy argued that while this might be the scenario the most important priority was preparation for an all out,

¹⁶⁷"Armed Forces: The Admiral and the Atom," Time, 21 May 1956, pp. 25-32.

¹⁶⁸Memorandum of Conference with the President, May 24, 1956, AWF-DDE Diary, Box 15, 5/56 Goodpaster.

full scale war with unrestricted use of nuclear weapons by both sides from the onset. Readiness for this worst case would inevitably provide for any lesser contingencies. Taylor disagreed, saying such an approach limited flexibility and "would absorb all available funds."¹⁶⁹

A related disagreement was over the commitment to use atomic weapons in every scenario, to include small wars. Again, this limited flexibility and undercut the readiness of non-nuclear forces. What Taylor had presented Eisenhower was the essence of the New Look vs. Flexible Response debate that had led to The Revolt.¹⁷⁰

Eisenhower sided with Radford and the majority. Taylor, he said, was basing his argument on a number of assumptions that the President did not share. First, he obviously thought that the Soviets valued human life as much as Americans did. Clearly, he said, they do not. They would be more than willing to risk destruction and casualties of nuclear war.¹⁷¹

The central question, said Eisenhower, was war between the two superpowers. Viewed from that perspective, atomic weapons had to be considered. It was "fatuous to think that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would be locked into a life and death struggle without using such weapons." Out readiness should be based on the use of atomic weapons by both sides.¹⁷²

Local wars, the President continued, could be fought with tactical nuclear weapons without risking escalation. Internal security forces and militaries in the contested regions needed to be built up. America

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid.

could provide supporting forces in time of war. We might even "put in several battalions at truly critical points." But what we could not do is tie down large numbers of troops "...around the Soviet periphery in small wars."¹⁷³

Massive retaliation, though not a popular term, was the key to survival. It was highly unlikely that forces could be moved in large numbers in the early days of such a war. The reliance would have to be on forces in place, on technology and firepower, and our strategic air power.¹⁷⁴

Taylor tried again to make his point. The priority should be calculations of the minimum needed for deterrence across the spectrum from small wars to nuclear war. Otherwise, calculating the total needs for fighting an all out nuclear war become open ended.¹⁷⁵

The President did not respond to Taylor's pitch as a call for economy and balance, but as a plea for a greater Army role. He was "very understanding that the position he had described did not leave the Army the same great role in the first year of war in relation to other Services as formerly." The Army's priority would have to be maintaining order within the United States.¹⁷⁶

But, once again, the President pointed out that the Chiefs should not think in terms of the primacy of their particular Service. Corporate judgment was more important than parochial concerns. Alluding to the events of the week, Eisenhower stressed American and allied confidence in the military was only weakened by airing internal

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

criticism of weapons systems. It only served to damage U.S. credibility. Conflicts should be resolved within the JCS.¹⁷⁷

Recognizing that the President had clearly decided against him, Taylor joined Radford in stating that this decision would have a significant impact on U.S. forces and on allies. The President downplayed the drastic nature of changes. Even Radford's contention that the U.S. might forward deploy nuclear missiles and tactical nuclear weapons did not strike the President as radical. These changes could be "gradually applied."¹⁷⁸

It would seem, then, that the Revolt was over. The President had made his decision and the New Look had clearly prevailed over Flexible Response. The Army would play a secondary role to the Air Force.

This was not, however, Eisenhower's first attempt to provide this guidance to the military. It would also not be the last. The Army would continue to advocate its policies, just as other Services would continue to advance theirs.

Less than two months later, "revolt" was in the news again. This time, it was all the Chiefs revolting against Radford. The Chairman had proposed cutting U.S. military forces from 2,800,000 to 2,000,000. This 800,000 man cut would dramatically affect all Services and would impact on the U.S. contribution to NATO. Press reports stated that concerns about political backlash had delayed any decision until after the November elections.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹"Radford Seeking 800,000-Man Cut; 3 Services Resist," The New York Times, 13 July 1956, sec. A, p. A1.

Radford quickly rebutted the statements, calling them "a mixture of fact and pure speculation." Any such cuts, he said could only come with modernization of weapons capabilities. These cuts were only speculative and designed for internal Pentagon study.¹⁸⁰

Eisenhower's admonitions for cooperation and "corporate judgment" were not being observed among the Chiefs. Individual Services continued to criticize each other. Two weeks after the meeting with Radford and Eisenhower, Taylor delivered a Speech to the Army War College outlining the National Military Program. Nothing had changed since Eisenhower had sided against him.¹⁸¹

Picking Up The Pieces

The few popular accounts of The Colonels' Revolt depict it as a devastating defeat for the Army in general and the participants in particular. Only Taylor, who abandoned his subordinates to save himself, and Westmoreland, who ruthlessly served as the hatchet man, managed to survive. That account is clearly at odds with reality.

Taylor did better than survive. The stories of his disagreements with Eisenhower grew to almost legendary status and, like Ridgway before him, he was often hailed for "resigning in protest." But he had in fact retired, and unlike his predecessor, he served a second term as Chief of Staff of the Army. He continued to urge a policy of Flexible Response throughout his term as Chief. Like Ridgway, he published a book after his retirement. The Uncertain Trumpet did not mention The Revolt, but

¹⁸⁰"Radford Terms New Arms Vital to Service Cuts," The New York Times, 14 July 1956, sec.A, p. A1.

¹⁸¹Address by General Maxwell Taylor to the National Strategy Seminar, Army War College, 6 June 1956, Box 5/D, No. 66, Speech File No. 4, MDT-NDU.

it clearly stated his differences with Wilson, Radford, and the President.¹⁸²

His National Military Program had attracted the attention of a number of politicians, among them Senator John F. Kennedy (D-MA). Kennedy had been sharply critical of Eisenhower's defense and foreign policies. Flexible Response was a major theme in his campaign for the Presidency. President Kennedy recalled Taylor to active to duty to serve as a special military advisor and, later, as Chairman of the JCS.¹⁸³

Westmoreland also benefited from Kennedy's attention. While serving as Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy, Westmoreland favorably impressed the President and was tapped to command U.S. Forces in Vietnam. He went on to serve as Chief of Staff.¹⁸⁴

The Colonels also did well. When the initial blow up occurred, the consensus was that it was important for them to lay low and get out of the spotlight. Most were immediately reassigned, but not to dead end positions signaling the end of their careers.¹⁸⁵ Yeuell was selected to attend the Army War College and to serve as a Division Artillery (DIVARTY) Commander. These are both significant career steps. Only those with outstanding records and promising futures are chosen. Distressed and impatient with the outcome of The Revolt, Yeuell retired

¹⁸²Taylor, Trumpet, *ibid.*

¹⁸³Halberstam, Best, pp. 200-204, 567-571; Krepinevich, Army and Vietnam, pg. 30.

¹⁸⁴Halberstam, Best, pp.677-678; Westmoreland OH-MHI.

¹⁸⁵Forsythe, Seamans, Westmoreland OH-MHI.

in 1960, one year before President Kennedy adopted many of the elements of the Coordination Group's program.¹⁸⁶

Most of the other Colonels remained on active duty well into the 1960s. George Forsythe, one of the original members of the Coordination Group before it was formally organized, would work for Westmoreland again in Vietnam and later directed the development and implementation of the All-Volunteer Army. He retired as a three-star General. William E. Depuy, who arrived at the Pentagon just in time for The Revolt, went on to serve as the first Commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, retiring as a four-star General. Many of the post-Vietnam reforms in Army training that led to the Army's success in the Gulf War (to include the development of the National Training Center for realistic maneuver warfare training) were credited to Depuy's leadership.¹⁸⁷

Others associated with The Revolt also went on to General Officer rank. In 1954, Frank Sackton had published an article on tactical nuclear weapons and was certain he had ended any hopes of a future in the Army. He retired in the late 1960s as a three-star General and Comptroller General of the Army.¹⁸⁸

Some, like Yeuell, chose to pursue other opportunities. Trevor Dupuy chose to retire in 1958 to accept a position on the Harvard faculty. Anthony Wermuth, Taylor's principal speech writer and the co-author of many of The Coordination Group's works, was promoted to

¹⁸⁶Halbertsma, Best, pp.578-579; Correspondence between William DePuy and Donovan Yeuell, 29 January through 3 March 1958, DePuy Papers, Box: Diplomas, etc. 1937-1969, File: W-X-Y-Z (58), MHI.

¹⁸⁷Depuy, OH-MHI; Eulogy for William E. Depuy, GEN Gorman, Depuy Papers, MHI; Forsythe, OH-MHI.

¹⁸⁸Halperin, Limited War (1962), p.171; Interviews with LTG (ret.) Frank Sackton.

Colonel and commanded a brigade. He chose to retire to accept a position with Westinghouse Corporation. He continued to write and conduct research on defense related issues.¹⁸⁹

Perhaps the most telling indicator was the fate of The Coordination Group as an institution. New officers were assigned to fill positions that had been vacated after The Revolt. Their duties and responsibilities remained essentially the same. Many had similar backgrounds to the original Group members. They included future Army Chief of Staff and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) General Bernard Rogers.

Only two officers would see their careers end as a result of events related to The Revolt. Both appear to have done so at their own choosing. One was Brigadier General Lyle Methany, director of the Group. He was reassigned but chose to retire in the summer of 1956.¹⁹⁰

The other was LTG Gavin. As the officer responsible for the Army's research and development programs, he continued to fight with the Air Force over the missile programs. He was frustrated when his plans to launch an earth orbiting satellite were put on hold at about the time The Revolt occurred (more than a year ahead of the Sputnik satellite launch).¹⁹¹ Finally, closed testimony to Congress on nuclear weapons effects was leaked to the media. Gavin had been asked in this classified forum to discuss the possible impact of a hypothetical nuclear war in Korea or Japan. His answer was a straightforward if somewhat grim picture of radiation clouds drifting over the only nation to ever suffer a nuclear attack. The resulting political uproar (keyed

¹⁸⁹AOG, Register, p.414, 435.

¹⁹⁰Halbertsam, Best, p. 578-579.

¹⁹¹Gavin, OH-MHI.

largely on its inherent contradictions of Air Force planning and New Look policy) ended when Gavin chose to retire.¹⁹²

Though offered opportunities for other jobs to temporarily move him from the spotlight (just as the Colonels had been moved), Gavin accepted an offer with a consulting firm and left Washington. He would serve as Kennedy's Ambassador to France and would later take part in the debate over the Vietnam War. At one point he was prepared to run as a Republican anti-war candidate in 1968. His decision to retire, however, disappointed a number of the Colonels who had hope he might succeed Taylor and, under a Democratic administration, continue to fight for the programs the Colonels had proposed.¹⁹³

The Colonels survived, the Coordination Group was still operating, and the debate continued. World events continued to provide the Army with the opportunity to reemphasize its position. In 1956, the Soviets crushed an uprising in Hungary. The U.S. did not intervene with nuclear weapons. The crisis in Lebanon led to intervention with U.S. Army and Marine units, but no nuclear weapons. The growing insurgencies in Laos and Cambodia and the fragile hold on power by South Vietnam's President Diem all demanded U.S. attention. The Batista Government collapsed in Cuba. All were examples of the kinds of "brush wars" the Colonels had warned of.¹⁹⁴

Eisenhower continued to disagree with large-scale American involvement in wars on the Soviet periphery. Other than Lebanon, he did not see the need to provide troops in those conflicts and he did not see

¹⁹²Biggs, Gavin, pp. 91-103; Gavin, OH-MHI.

¹⁹³Biggs, Gavin, pp. 135-156 ;Gavin, OH-MHI; Depuy Papers, OH- MHI; Zais Papers, OH MHI.

¹⁹⁴Ambrose, President, pp. 371-373, 464-475; Gaddis, Strategies, pp. 177-178.

the need to escalate those conflicts to nuclear exchanges. He continued to rely on the CIA (a policy that would later prove disastrous at Cuba's Bay of Pigs). But Eisenhower also began to back into the idea of providing military advisors as a means of bolstering the U.S. ability to rely on allies to hand local conflicts.¹⁹⁵

The debate over limited war did not end with The Revolt. In 1957 and again in 1960, the JCS and the NSC conducted extensive studies on the U.S. capabilities to wage limited wars. Much of those studies in still classified, but those portions open for review indicate concerns about weaknesses in logistics and support. The 1960 study also cites an assumption of multiple, simultaneous conflicts; something Eisenhower had always feared.¹⁹⁶

Eisenhower continued to have problems with interService fights. In 1958, there was another revolt. This time, the Air Force Generals objected to the loss of their part of the space program to the newly formed National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In April 1956, Eisenhower had given directions that the missile program have a single director.¹⁹⁷ Like so much of his guidance on these issues, this was virtually ignored. The result had been the embarrassment of the Sputnik launch. The satellite Gavin had been ready to launch in 1956 was eventually put into space, but the Soviet's had already put America

¹⁹⁵Ambrose, President, pp. 464-475; Gaddis, ibid.; Krepinevich Army and Vietnam, pp. 17-21.

¹⁹⁶Memorandum for the Secretary of State, The Secretary of Defense, Subject: NSC Action No. 1934-c, 3 July 1958, National Security Council (NSC) Series, Briefing Notes Subseries, Box 12, Folder: Limited War (2), DDE; Briefing Note for PB Mtg, U.S. and Allied Capabilities for Limited Military Operations to 1 July 1962, 29 September 1960, NSC Series, ibid.; Memorandum for the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Subject: Interdepartment Committee Study on: "United States and Allied Capabilities for Limited Military Operations to 1 July 1962", 4 October 1960, NSC Series, ibid., Folder: Limited War (1).

¹⁹⁷Memorandum of Meeting, April 18, ibid., DDE.

in the position of playing catch up instead of demonstrating superiority.

In the wake of the 1958 uprising, Eisenhower asked COL Goodpaster to provide him a list of "...the number of times he had given his 'lecture' on why there should not be interService rivalries between members of the Armed Services." Five meetings were cited. The list was incomplete. He had spoken and written to the Chiefs collectively and individually. He had brief them as they assumed their duties. He had lectured them when conflicts arose and sometimes even when things were relatively peaceful in the joint arena.¹⁹⁸

In August 1956, the President's brother, Pennsylvania State University President Milton Eisenhower, had asked Eisenhower's personal secretary, Ann Whitman, to outline how the President spent his official time. In her several page response, she noted that unscheduled meetings on defense matters were ..." a great time- consuming area. I can't always see why some inter-Service problems cannot be resolved before they come to the President, but apparently, as matters stand, they cannot."¹⁹⁹ Eisenhower affirmed this aggravation in a letter to long time friend Swede Hazlett. "...I should say that my most frustrating domestic problem is that of attempting to achieve any real coordination among the Services."

¹⁹⁸Diary, 6 January 1958, attached: Major Meetings at which interservice rivalries were discussed, AWF-AWD, Box 9, 1/58 (3), DDE; Examples of other briefings and meetings include untitled entry, 17 May 1955 outlines meeting with Admiral Burke, then under consideration for appointment as Chief of Naval Operations, AWF-AWD, Box 5, 5/55 (3), DDE, and Memorandum of Conference with the President, 29 June 1955, AWF-AWD, Box 6, 7/55 (5), DDE.

¹⁹⁹Letter, "Dear Dr. Milton," Personal and Confidential, 28 August 1956, AWF-DDE Diary, Box 17, 8/56 misc (1), DDE.

"(S)ome day there is going to be a man sitting in my present chair who has not been raising in the military Services," he write, "and who will have little understanding of where the slashes in their estimates can be made with little or no damage. If that should happen while we still have the state of tension that now exists in the world, I shudder to thing of what could happen in this country."²⁰⁰

Eisenhower's concern about the nation's defense continued throughout his term. In his farewell address to the nation, he warned of the growing "military-industrial complex," in language reminiscent of his Cross of Iron address almost eight years earlier. He cited links between the armaments industry and the military that were unknown prior to World War II.

"In the councils of government," he said, "we must guard against the unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."²⁰¹

The debate over Massive Retaliation and Flexible Response finally effectively ended with the election of John F. Kennedy. Kennedy and other Democrats had criticized the policies of Eisenhower, Wilson, and Dulles. The U.S. was unprepared to meet the demands of limited war, Kennedy argued. Furthermore, the failure of the Eisenhower Administration to coordinate the development of missile programs had led to the embarrassment of Sputnik and a "gap" in missiles between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.²⁰²

²⁰⁰Letter, "Dear Swede," Personal and Confidential, 20 August 1956, AWF-DDE Diary, Box 17, 8/56 misc (2), DDE.

²⁰¹Ambrose, President, pp. 612-614.

²⁰²Halbertsam, Best, pp. 31, 200-201; Fred Kaplan, The Wizards of Armageddon, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983) pp. 286-290.

With Kennedy in the White House, The Coordination Group could finally claim victory in the policy debate. But the direction of military policy under Kennedy was not always consistent with the original goals of the Colonels, many of whom were now Generals. The Colonels had wanted an Army capable of providing sufficient conventional forces to meet the demands of a limited war. The Army also wanted a greater role in missile development.

Missiles were now the primary responsibility of the Air Force and NASA. Conventional Army forces were getting more attention, but Kennedy's interests were in ensuring that the Army was capable of performing a mission that Eisenhower had left to the CIA. The Army had to be prepared to deal with counter insurgency and guerrilla warfare. That was what the President and his party believe to be the principal tactic of the Communists.²⁰³

The answer for Kennedy was special forces and unconventional war. The answer for the Army was regular troops and conventional warfare. To further complicate matters, Kennedy's preferred battleground appeared to Southeast Asia, an area that the Army had not wanted to enter in 1954. That reluctance was not gone, but gradually the Army became willing to accept military involvement in Vietnam as both a national security imperative and a means of validating its role. Eisenhower had lectured the Army on the importance of strategic nuclear capabilities over conventional forces. Now Kennedy was lecturing them on the importance of special forces over conventional forces.²⁰⁴

²⁰³Krepinivich, Army, pp. 29-33.

²⁰⁴Robert Buzzanco, "The American Military's Rationale against the Vietnam War, " Political Science Quarterly, 4 (1986)", pp. 559-576; Buzzanco, "U.S. Military Opposition to Vietnam, 1950-54," Diplomatic History, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp.201-222; Roger Hilsman, American Guerrilla:

After all the debate between the Army and the Air Force over the essential capabilities for the next war, neither side prevailed. In 1965, Vietnam became, "the next war." The doctrines used to fight that war did not involve the Army's Pentatomic Division, designed by the Coordination Group after The Revolt" to fight limited wars. No tactical nuclear weapons were used. Missiles did not replace conventional artillery. In the end, the Army fought an unsatisfactory combination of counterinsurgency tactics that it did not want and conventional tactics it had once vowed "never again," to use.²⁰⁵

The years after that war brought another change. Throughout the period leading up to The Revolt and for several years afterwards, participants on both sides of the debate criticized the structure and operations of the Joint Staff. What might once have seemed to be a satisfactory compromise with those who advocated total unification, was now an unwieldy institution that hindered rather than promoted interService cooperation.²⁰⁶

The catalyst for this change was not another series of debates over national military strategy, nor was it a budget battle during a time of constrained resources. The international environment had been relatively stable and the patterns of the Cold War had been relatively fixed. What brought the issue of joint interoperability to the forefront was a series of incidents related to the 1983 American intervention in Grenada. These were compounded by a general sense that

My War Behind Japanese Lines, (Washington: Brassey's, 1990), pp. 260-265; Krepinevich, Ibid.

²⁰⁵Krepinevich, The Army, pp. ; Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Vietnam as Military History," Joint Force Quarterly, 3 (Winter 1993-94)

²⁰⁶Huntington, Defense, pp. 371 ; Schilling, "FY 1950", pp. 107-110.

military procurement procedures and resource management were out of control.²⁰⁷

The reforms were fueled by anecdotes about overpriced hammers and toilet seats and Army officers using civilian long distance phone Services to adjust the direction of Naval Gunfire. Other issues contributed to the momentum behind the reforms. The tragic failure of the DESERT ONE rescue mission provided a powerful indictment of the Services and their continuing parochialism. But the public imagination had been captured by the comic opera aspect of other events and that helped to generate the support needed to pass the Goldwater-Nichols reforms.²⁰⁸

Proposals to give more power to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to unify the staff, and provide the kind of "corporate judgment" sought by Eisenhower all failed to come to pass. The Goldwater-Nichols Act, however, helped limit many of the institutional weaknesses that led to The Revolt. The changes were not done without difficulty and their outcome is still not final. But the results to date have been to strengthen the hands of the Chairman and to move toward greater staff unity and interoperability down to the operational level.²⁰⁹

Today's military still experiences interService rivalries. Many of the same issues arise. The comparative value of air power over ground operations is still being debated in the analyses of the Gulf War.²¹⁰ The ferocity, however, has diminished. The institutional means

²⁰⁷Maynard,, "New American Way"; Ike Skeleton, "Taking Stock of the New Joint Age," Joint Services Quarterly, 3 (Winter 1993-94), pp. 15-21.

²⁰⁸ibid.

²⁰⁹Maynard, Ibid..

²¹⁰Elliot A. Cohen, "The Mystique of U.S. Air Power," Foreign Affairs, 73 (January/February 1994) pp. 109-124.

of identifying and resolving conflicts exists. Force level cuts far greater than those felt in the 1950's have already occurred in the post Cold War era and to date nothing similar to The Revolt has come to pass.²¹¹

In 1954, on the eve of The Revolt, the Services still viewed themselves as independent agencies. The lessons of World War II and the divisive political battles of 1946-1950 that left the nation unprepared for War in Korea had done little to move the Services toward a collective view of the nation's security. In 1994, after a period of international political turmoil not seen since the start of the Cold War, the Services have been forced to view themselves as part of unified institution. In theory, they are now able to look beyond internal concerns of Service doctrine, force structure, and budgets. Still unanswered is the question of how much of this theory can be put into practice to allow the Services to provide a collective contribution to the development and implementation of national strategy.

²¹¹Maynard "New American Way," *ibid.*

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

WHAT THE REVOLT TEACHES US

Actors, Events, and Levels of Analysis

The study of policy making focuses on three types of incidents or events. The first is "isolated incidents." These are pivotal points in history unforeseen and apparently detached from those events and decisions that proceed them. Thus imposed, they serve as dramatic break points that clearly mark an era in history. Assassinations, for example, are isolated incidents that have a dramatic impact. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 or the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 did not flow naturally from the events that preceded them. Likewise, Commodore Perry's visit to Japan in 1854--though clearly pivotal to the history of modern Asia--was not something that naturally flowed from the events in Japan.

While many events may, at first, seem to be isolated incidents, on fuller and more careful study they prove to be far more connected to other events than previously thought. Often these are "culminating events." Also pivotal, they flow from an internal logic of the events that proceed them and serve to link all that has gone on before. When the paths of these previous decisions and events finally cross, they then lead nations and their decision makers in a new direction. The U.S. decision to send ground troops to Vietnam in 1965 was such an event. Its roots stretched back to U.S. policy in the Second World War

and there were clear links to other Cold War policies and decisions and to U.S. domestic politics.

But many events and incidents, while unique in many ways, are not truly pivotal. They do not send decision makers off on a new path. Instead, they provide a snapshot of the process. These are "focal events." They characterize how policies are being made. They serve as key links to what are ultimately culminating events. They are points at which most if not all of the key actors and factors are involved and at which the normal procedures and processes are carried out.

These are more useful to those studying policy than either of the other two. In fact, culminating and, to a certain extent, even isolated events can not be properly studied or understood without studying focal events. They provide context and, in so doing, provide us with invaluable frameworks for building useful models and paradigms.

The Colonels' Revolt is such an event. It was not isolated. It was, in fact "business as usual." There was clear continuity from the decision makers actions in 1946 to their actions in 1956 and, to a certain extent, to their actions into the 1980s. It was a "way station" enroute to pivotal decisions about defense and foreign policy. It was also an intersection for virtually every element and every actor in the policy making process. As such, The Colonels' Revolt provides an important window on the process of making and implementing U.S. National Strategy.

To understand how this occurs, an essential first step in the analysis is the selection of a level of analysis. This is the principle means of focusing attention on elements of the case and providing for rigor in the application and development of theory. The complimentary

levels of analysis are normally divided into three to five categories.²¹²

For purposes of answering the basic questions posed in this study, the optional levels of analysis include;

- 1) The nature of the international environment--explaining U.S. strategy making and the resulting policy decisions based on the opportunities and constraints inherent in the broader inter-state system of international politics.
- 2) The nature of the state--explaining events based on the particular internal structure and character of the United States
- 3) The organizational process--explaining the case based on the dynamics of the political interaction of institutions and organizations. Sometimes interchangeably cited as the bureaucratic politics approach, it in fact takes in a broader range of variables.
- 4) The individual--explaining events based on the actions and beliefs of key individuals in the process. Sometimes referred to as the "Great Man" approach²¹³

Should the analysis of this case focus on the international environment, the nature of the domestic state, the organizational approach, or the individual level of analysis? The answer to that question is an only partly facetious "Yes." The danger of narrowing the focus for sake of rigor is the ignoring of the important richness of the process.²¹⁴

²¹²Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) p. 158; J. David Singer, "The Levels of Analysis Problem in International Relations," ed. Klaus Knorr and Sydney Verba, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) pp. 77-92.

²¹³A summary of various theories associated with each of these levels of analysis can be found in James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. Contending Theories of International Relations, (New York: Harper Collins, 1990).

²¹⁴This approach is now gaining greater favor. A landmark work outlining and advocating this methodology is Jack Snyder, "Richness, Rigor, and Relevance in the Study of Soviet Foreign Policy," International Security, Vol 9, No. 3, (Winter 1984/85) pp. 89-108. Also see J. David Singer, "The Incomplete Theorist: Insight Without

In this conclusion, levels of analysis will be used to complement rather than compete with one another. This adds to the complexity and breadth of the work and makes it difficult to separate necessary from sufficient causes in the explanation of outcome. I contend, however, that it is the accumulation of sufficient causes rather a limited number of necessary causes that best explains events. Otherwise, one is left with the belief that all complex political events can be explained with the "Colonel Mustard in the Library with the Wrench" approach to analyses.²¹⁵

Question 1--What Happened?

The framework for The Colonels' Revolt was set by the nature of the international environment. The drive for national survival is set by the competition between sovereign states in the anarchic international environment. States seek to balance or bandwagon as a means of ensuring security; optimally through primacy and in practice through parity.²¹⁶

Evidence," in Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau, ed. Contending Approaches to International Politics, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). This expansion of methodology is consistent with the movement away from the linearity of logical positivism that emerged as attempts were made to develop theory for the social sciences patterned after methodologies used in the so-called "hard sciences." Work is now being done to move beyond this constraining Newtonian view toward a more eclectic and less deterministic approach. See James Gleick, Chaos: Making of New Science, (New York: Viking, 1987).

²¹⁵This does not imply that rigor lacks value. The four functions of theory are to describe, explain, predict, and prescribe. Rigor and richness each have varying degrees of utility in performing these function.

²¹⁶This realist view has been expounded on in countless volumes since Thucydides, the acknowledged father of realism, first chronicled the Peloponnesian Wars. The best contemporary explanation of modern realist thought (sometimes referred to as neorealism) can be found in Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics, (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

The patterns of Cold War strategy had been forged and Containment had been institutionalized by the time of The Revolt. All participants had agreed on the basic premises of the threat. There was a general agreement on the elements of the strategic response to the threat. Why, then, was there a revolt?

Part of the reason lay in the nature of the international environment. The threat was, to a certain extent ambiguous and not all of this can be laid to the perceptions of the participants. The Revolt occurred at a time of changing strategies for the Soviets and it also occurred at a point when what is often presented as a bi-polar environment was--in fact--fragmenting.

Setting a strategic response to the Soviets in Europe was only part of the problem. There was now a perceived requirement to develop responses to meet the requirements in each of those areas where the U.S. was challenged. More important, there was a requirement to ensure that those specific responses both met the unique requirements of their setting and were fully integrated with all other responses. In other words, strategy, by definition must be both responsive and comprehensive.

One response to this demand consistent with psychological approaches found in the individual level of analysis is to impose a degree of cognitive consistency on the environment to allow for the simplification of the problem and, therefore, the response.²¹⁷ To a large extent, this was the response of all participants in this process.

²¹⁷Jervis, "Political Decision Making: Recent Contributions," Political Psychology, 2 (Summer 1980) pp. 98-100; Jervis, Perception; Deborah Larson, Origins of Containment: A Psychological Approach, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

They saw a threat to one as a threat to all. This did not resolve the issues that needed resolution. However even when participants in The Revolt would rhetorically alluded to the threat as a monolith, their proposed policy responses at least acknowledged a degree of diversity to the threat and a need to both prioritize and integrate responses.

Eisenhower clearly did the best job of this. He devised an integrated approach to implementing the national strategy. He incorporated all elements of strategy with a particular emphasis on both the economic and the domestic political components. The Colonels attempted to integrate a wide range of policy responses into limited war. Their view of limited war was, in fact, itself limited.

They thought they were arguing competing strategies. In fact, they were arguing competing doctrines with the Air Force and arguing doctrines versus strategies with Eisenhower. They failed to grasp the full nature of the problem. The requirement was to provide a strategy to match national policy, not a doctrine to replace the strategy.

Part of the reason for this was the distinctive nature of the American military. The Services had shifted from virtual independence to interdependence. But despite the presence of a Secretary of Defense and a new joint bureaucracy, no one had sufficient authority or vision to understand that the development of a comprehensive strategy is not a zero-sum game.

It is not enough to tell participants in the process to transform their point of view (as Eisenhower frequently told the Chiefs) if there is no vision of transformation that ensures survival. That vision of survival must also be consistent with the values and beliefs of those in the organization. Telling the Army that their principal role in the

next war would be internal security is not reassuring when the organization perceives that as a job for the local police and not the Army of a Superpower.

All organizations will struggle for institutional survival if they perceive a threat to their common purpose and their inherent values.²¹⁸ With military organizations in general and The Coordination Group in particular the response to this threat is heightened by the perceived stakes involved. The issues addressed were national survival, not third quarter profits.

This also helps to explain why the patterns of The Revolt seem to contradict some earlier studies of this defense policy making process. Schilling, for example, wrote of the "strain toward agreement" among quasi-sovereign organizations. Institutions will form alliances with their bureaucratic enemies and build the consensus needed to make policy.²¹⁹ The Colonels' however, made no such agreements. They chose a policy of confrontation.

In viewing the record, however, it is apparent that Schilling's views are validated (and are also consistent with Huntington's numerous writings on the topic) within the the individual Services, but not between them. The Colonels survived as an institution and as individuals because they could control the internal dynamics of their institution. They failed, however, to understand the policies chosen by the civilian leadership to implement national strategy and, as a result, they failed to adequately prepare themselves for the next war. Had they

²¹⁸Robert Presthus, The Organizational Society, (New York: St. Martin's, 1978), pp. 252-269; Howard F. Stein, "Adapting to Doom: The Group Psychology of an Organization Threatened with Cultural Extinction," Political Psychology, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 113-145.

²¹⁹Schilling, "Politics of National Defense," pp. 19-27.

built consensus with other Services and accepted a broader definition of strategy, they might have been more successful. In fact, The Revolt might not ever have occurred. There are two important caveat to this, however.

First, such a consensus was not consistent with the belief systems of any other participants except for Eisenhower. The Colonels' individual views defined and buttressed the organizational view. They would have to overcome their own individual cognitive closure before building a consensus consistent with the strategy of Containment abroad and economy at home.²²⁰

In fact, it could be argued that The Colonels not only failed to understand the strategy, they failed to adequately understand the basic concept of strategy. Eisenhower defined his terms based on his own unique combination of experiences in the Washington political arena and in the leadership of wartime joint and coalition forces. While the Colonels may have read and studied Clausewitz, Eisenhower understood and, quite literally, lived the Prussian's works.

The second important caveat is that if they had prepared to fight the next war as it was eventually fought, they would still have failed. The national policy and the Service doctrine used to fight the Vietnam War ultimately bore little resemblance to those advanced by The

²²⁰The distinction between an organizational and an individual level of analysis on this point is found in the formation and operationalization of individual beliefs. Larson, for example, demonstrated how the key American actors in the early years of the Cold War eventually reached the same conclusions. But each did so at different points in time, based on different experiences and different interpretations of events. Each used a wide range of cognitive devices for coming to closure on their views. Most importantly, the consensus on policy was a sometimes thin veneer over different assumptions and definitions of key terms and concepts. Origins of Containment.

Colonels.²²¹ Graduated response, not flexible response, was the guiding principle in Vietnam. The Army's most significant doctrinal contribution to the Vietnam War was based on counterinsurgency, an approach to warfare largely rejected by mainstream Army officers of whom The Colonels were typical.²²²

Question 2--"What was the Impact?"

In the short term, virtually nothing changed except for the names of some of the participants. Because The Revolt was a focal rather than a pivotal event, it exemplified rather than transformed. In the long term, The Revolt and the kinds of events it represents served to stall a serious discussion of strategy.

When Stalin died, when Khrushchev altered the external manifestations of expansionism, when McCarthy was discredited, and at numerous other points, any real debate on revising the national strategy could not effectively incorporate the views of the military. This, of course, begs the question of how much the military should be involved in setting strategy and developing policy to match it.²²³

In a democracy, the presumption of civilian control makes the military a technical advisor rather than a policy maker. Keeping the military out of real strategy and policy making was consistent with the traditional American view, espoused by De Tocqueville. The only

²²¹My thanks to Professor David Kaiser for highlighting this point.

²²²For a full discussion of this, see Krepinevich, Army in Vietnam. For an example of the mainstream Army's rejection of this doctrine, see Harry G. Summers, On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 1981). Owens attempts to reconcile both views in "Vietnam".ibid.

²²³This debate continues. See Richard H. Kohn, "The Crisis in Military-Civilian Relations," The National Interest, 35 (Spring 1994) pp. 3-17.

constraint on democratic armies (who want to wage war) and democratic politicians (who want avoid it) is to ensure that civilians maintain control.²²⁴

The Army (and all other Services) focused more on internal doctrine and organizational survival than on macro concerns of strategy. The civilian attempts at control by Eisenhower were not to constrain the military from advocating when to wage war. Eisenhower was attempting to guide the Chiefs to assume a broader sense of responsibility. He felt they were constrained by themselves and not by the system.

The long term impact of The Revolt can be addressed by asking the third basic question of this study.

Question 3--"What has changed?"

The joint reforms of Goldwater-Nichols were not direct results of The Revolt. Arguably, however, they were products of the environment that The Revolt represents. In that context, "What has changed?" is a function of "What Happened?".

The Revolt was part of a larger pattern of competition between Services. Those individual Services have changed in the years since. More importantly, however, the larger American defense institutions has changed. In fact, change in the individual Services has been driven by these larger institutional changes. The "top down" emphasis on joint interoperability, the formal integration of joint staffs, and the training in joint operations all represent changes in how the process works. "Bottom up" institutional revisions are not sufficient (nor are

²²⁴Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Ed. Richard D. Heffner, (New York: Signet, 1956) pp. 274-280.

they sometimes even necessary) for genuine change. The Colonels' Revolt contributed to change, but that change came from the larger institution's desire to end hostile competition, not as the result of the large institution's positive evaluation of one Service's demand for primacy over other Services.

Over time, however, structural change (if sustained) leads to individual change. The effect is felt as new members enter the organization and are socialized to the values inherent in the organization's structure. Post Goldwater-Nichols officers, for example, are almost certain to place a high value on joint experience for succeeding generations of officers. A related factor is the perceived success of joint operations in the Gulf War. If militaries change as the result of failure and bolster existing values and practices after a success,²²⁵ then jointness was validated in the Gulf War.

While much is made of the structural changes of Goldwater-Nichols, it is worth remembering that the initial unification process in 1947 promised increased efficiency and economy as well as a comprehensive approach to security. If there is a significant change with recent reforms that will prevent another series of revolts, it is the training and socialization provided at key points in officer careers. In 1956, officers in the "unified" Defense Department were dependent on duty with their parent Service for promotion to senior rank. In 1994, an officer's future may hinge on completion of joint training and successful completion of a joint tour of duty.

²²⁵Rick Waddell, "The Army and Peacetime Low Intensity Conflict, 1961-1992: The Process of Peripheral and Fundamental Military Change," unpublished paper, November 1992.

This socialization, however, is significantly undercut by the same reality that undercut other unification efforts. Limited resources lead to a reordering of priorities and an elimination of those programs and systems at the low end of the scale. The interService roles and missions debate was a product of tightening budgets. When budget disputes threaten institutional (and, by inference, individual) survival, the actors in the process will fall back on core beliefs rather than take risks with values they are still learning to accept. Lean budget years are not optimal time to expect unification, regardless of structures only recently imposed.

Question 4--"What does this teach us?"

If The Colonels' Revolt had been an isolated incident or a culminating event, it might provide a number of new lessons about the process of developing strategy and translating it into policy. Instead its principal value is to revalidate the lessons of earlier studies. As a resource battle, it supports Bernard Brodie's contention that "Strategy wears a dollar sign."²²⁶

While The Revolt was about money, it was also about the roles and missions of the organization. Defining roles and missions, in this case was viewed as a zero-sum game. If the Army gained, the Air Force and Navy had to lose. The President's consistent theme was the lack of an integrated view of the national strategy on the part of the Chiefs.

²²⁶Brodie, Strategy, pp. 358-389; Brodie has, in essence validated for defense budgets what Wildavsky posited for all budgets. Aaron Wildavsky, The Politics of the Budgetary Process, (Boston: Little Brown, 1964). LTG (ret.) Frank Sackton often stated that on his first day as Comptroller General of the Army, the only item he found on his desk was a copy of Wildavsky's book with an anonymous note urging "Read this!".

The lesson to be drawn, however, is not that Services must discard their agendas for the common good. Organizational theory tells us such a noble act would be, at best, extremely difficult. Instead, those Services who can take the broader, positive view and form a consensus will optimize their results in a competition for roles and missions and resources. When the Army moved away from advocacy and consensus and went on the attack, it suffered a setback.

Another key element of The Revolt was the belief systems of the key actors. A collective view of the Army and the Air Force misses much of the richness of the process. There were significant differences between Ridgway and Taylor, for example, in their approach to issues they agreed on. Their beliefs on how to deal with the President's policies were so different that Taylor was able to continue to press his beliefs even after The Revolt, while Ridgway lasted for only one term as Chief of Staff. Wilson, Taylor, Gavin, and Ridgway all put an individual stamp on this period. Even the Colonels were divided on how to respond to events.²²⁷

Individuals clearly do matter in the process. Eisenhower most clearly exemplifies this. His consensus building approach to the process of making appropriate defense policies to match the nation's strategy set the essential framework for these events. He could have been far more directive and autocratic. He had the official position and certainly had the personal credibility to do so. In spite of his own personal frustration, however, he allowed the debate to continue.

²²⁷This is consistent with most literature on the psychological dimensions of foreign policy decision making. The most thorough study on this topic is Larson, Containment, Ibid.

Finally, we learn a valuable lesson from the study of The Revolt by considering the methods we used to learn. Understanding and learning from events like The Colonels' Revolt requires a knowledge of context. The broader context of time, actors, and events all played an important part in this case. Understanding the interService rivalry of 1956 requires an understanding of the Korean War, the economy, domestic anti-Communism, internal Republic Party politics, and the state of the military between the World Wars. To eliminate these variables and focus strictly on the press conference and the immediate events leading up to The Revolt is to miss the complex reality of the larger process.²²⁸

²²⁸Owens, "Vietnam " *ibid.*

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